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Memories of By-Gone Days

W. H. Steele

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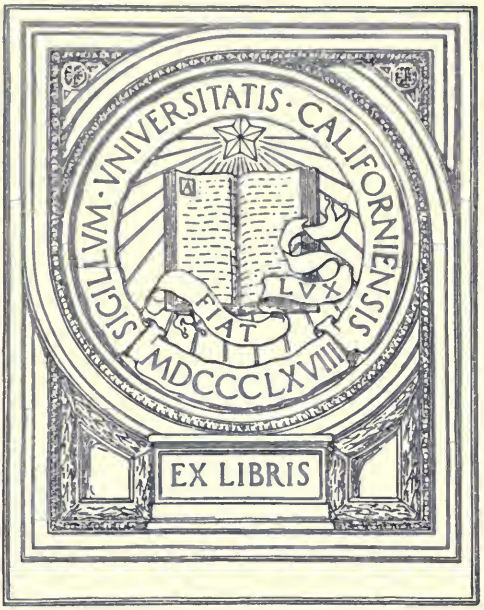

ROBERT ERNEST COWAN

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W. H. STEELE

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MEMORIES *of* BY-GONE DAYS

By W. H. STEELE

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
THE AUTHOR

HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
YEAR MCMXII

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TO MY WIFE

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FOREWORD.

When my husband asked me to write the foreword to this little book I was glad, for no one except the author can feel so great an interest in this as I do. His articles and pictures for the outdoor magazines have been a pleasure to both of us, and it has long been my desire to see them gathered into a volume in permanent form.

In "Memories of Bygone Days" there is no morbid tendency to disparage present joys, but simply a wholesome retrospect.

> "Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain
> Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain."

We may make of memory a blessing or a curse, just as we will. It is a stupendous thought that we are augmenting or decreasing future pleasure by the way we spend today. "The only use we have for our past is to get a future out of it."

> "All the pleasures of today
> One by one soon glide away
> To the golden shore of sweet long ago."

Happy is that man whose memories are pleasant and profitable company.

ALICE KIMBALL STEELE.

Hastings, Nebraska.

Old Maquoketa.

Dear Maquoketa, beautiful stream
Scenes of childhood boyhood's dream!
In memory I hear thy ripple and roar,
As—a barefoot boy—I trod thy shore.

In memory's boat, floating under the trees,
I hear the song of the summer breeze,
And feel on my brow the air so cool
As my boat glides in to Honey Creek pool.

On—under the oaks past Rohrick's Bend,
Down to the Ford where the waters descend
With a rush and a roar, we glide on our way
Where the sunlit waters laughingly play

The heart beats quick as I live life o'er,
Drifting along
the familiar shore;
And may these gems
in memory seen
Never be dimm'd
on memory's screen.

—W. H. Steele.

Father's Last Picture.

Memories of Father.

Those of our readers who have reached the meridian of life and are traveling down the shady side no doubt often look back to boyhood, and live over again those glorious days on the stream, in the wood or in the thicket. I am thankful for the faculty that enables me to look back and enjoy, in retrospect, those boyhood days.

Among the most pleasant memories of bygone days are the fishing and shooting trips with father. He was a natural woodsman, a good shot, and successful with the rod. Among my earliest recollections are the days I followed father through the woods carrying his game for him.

Ah, well do I remember the first fish I caught! It was father who cut the little willow pole, tied on a line of linen thread and a bent pin hook.

He showed me where to drop in my line near the roots of a stump, then went back to his fishing, but kept an eye on me.

As the pin hook sank slowly near the roots, a very small pumpkin seed snatched the bait off my hook and disappeared

before I thought of jerking him out. I called to father and he came and baited my hook again, and showed me how to do my own baiting. Then, instructing me carefully how to hook and land my catch, he went back to his fishing again. I continued feeding them angleworms, and as the feast progressed the fish increased in numbers and size. At last a big one grabbed the bait so greedily that the bent pin got down his throat so far it caught fast and I landed him.

Father had to release the hook, but that is all I allowed him to do. I cut a willow stringer, placed him on it, and laid him in the edge of the water.

This was the beginning of an angling comradeship that lasted through the remainder of father's life.

Many happy days did we spend together on lake and stream.

I remember, too, the first hunt we enjoyed together when I got old enough to own and carry my own gun. It was a cheap, second-hand single barrel, but to me it was a beauty and I carried it that day with more pride and pleasure than I have ever felt over any gun since.

It was a beautiful day in autumn that father took me with him on my first squirrel hunt. Game was plentiful in those days, and we had been in the woods but a short time, when a grey flirted his tail at us, and scampered up a large white oak. Father pointed him out to me, away up in a fork; I took careful aim, pulled the trigger, and at the crack of the gun down came my first squirrel. He no sooner struck the ground, then gathering himself together he started up the tree again. Grasping my gun by the barrel, I whacked away at him with the stock. I missed the squirrel, but hit the tree and, of course, broke my gun-stock.

I had some copper wire in my pocket, with which father wound the broken stock, and I was in shooting trim again. From this accident I learned two valuable lessons—first, how to repair a gun-stock in the field; second, never to use the

wrong end of my gun on game unless compelled to do so in self-defense. We had a pleasant and successful day's hunt, taking home with us a fine string of pigeons and squirrels.

This was our first hunt together, but not our last. As long as I remained at home father was my first choice on all shooting and fishing trips. Many a happy day we spent together, tramping through the old familiar woods after squirrels, quail and pheasants, or following the windings of the Maquoketa, after ducks and fish.

When I located in a distant city for the practice of my profession, I continued my early morning shooting and fishing trips as of old, but missed the companionship of father. However, he visited me nearly every year as long as he was able to do so and, at such times, we enjoyed several days of shooting and fishing together. The last time he came I was living at Forest City, Iowa, and we had some fine squirrel shooting.

I shall never forget that last beautiful autumn morning we spent in the woods on Lime Creek. We got a fine bunch of squirrels early in the forenoon and decided to return for dinner. After crossing the foot bridge I made a snap-shot of father before we took the short-cut through Mahony's Grove. That was our last hunt together, and the picture I made that morning was the last father ever had.

Had I then known these lines from Riley I should have exclaimed:

"Oh, the present is too sweet
To go on forever thus!
Round the corner of the street
Who can say what waits for us?"

My First Pair of Mallards.

Nothing revives happy episodes of the past more vividly than a visit to one's boyhood home. Yet, although it affords much pleasure to re-visit the old scenes, there is oftentimes a dark side to the bright picture you had stored away in memory. The timber has been cut off the hills, the dear old plum thicket is gone, the venerable walnut trees have been sacrificed for lumber, and the river is not so deep, nor so wide, nor so clear as it used to be. Many of the old schoolmates are sleeping in the little village cemetery; others have moved away; and —saddest of all—strangers are living in the dear old homestead where so many happy hours were spent. A visit of this kind, not long ago, carried me back to the morning of my first success in duck hunting. The scene of this exploit was the "Old Goose Pond," in Eastern Iowa. At that time it was a large body of water and five or six feet deep; but, when last visited, the water had been drained off and the place where I shot my first mallard was a vast field of waving corn. Standing on the edge of the field, and looking across toward the distant hills, memory filled all that fertile lowland with water, and the picture of a bare-footed boy, with a small single barrel in one hand, as with the other he tremblingly poked aside the rushes and cat-tails, seemed as real as on that eventful morning over thirty-five years ago, when I pulled my first trigger on ducks.

I was always a great lover of field and stream, and, when a boy, spent all my leisure time roaming the woods or following the winding turns of the old Maquoketa. I was familiar with every nook and cranny of that classic stream. I could point out the dead tree overhanging the shallow riffles, where you were always sure to find a kingfisher sitting, peering down into the water—watching for his dinner. The best squirrel trees and fishing holes were known to me, and if I wanted a string of bass, suckers, dace or chubs, I knew where to find them, and the kind of bait and tackle that would take them. Others might

come home from the river with empty creel, and the proverbial fisherman's luck; but rarely did I spend a day on Honey Creek, Coffin's Creek or the Maquoketa without getting a fine string of fish; and many's the time I have come home at night with a willow stringer thrown over my shoulder and the tails of the bottom fish dragging the ground behind me.

Returning from one of those Saturday fishing trips, as I was passing near the end of Goose Pond, my ears caught the sound of splashing water, and, thinking it might be made by a family of muskrats, I determined to investigate. Crawling cautiously to the edge of the thicket, what was my surprise to see a mother mallard and her brood. She was giving her little family their supper, and the way those little balls of down went after the tender celery roots that the duck mother brought up from the bottom for them was a caution. How I did enjoy watching this most wary of our game birds and her young brood at supper—out there on the still waters of the old pond! Then came a low but resonant "Quack! quack!" from the rushes near the far shore, and the mother duck, answering, swam off to meet her mate. I had been coaxing father for a gun ever since Christmas, and had been told that I was not yet old enough to handle one. But the sight I had just witnessed aroused me to the verge of desperation. This being the breeding ground of the brood, I knew they would make the place their home, until the migratory flocks began to arrive from the north in the fall. The place was seldom visited by any one but myself, and it was more than likely I would get the first chance at them when they would be large enough to shoot. On arriving home, I told father of my discovery, and pleaded again for a gun. "Well, Will," said he, "a boy is not large enough to have a gun until he is large enough to earn it. But if you can earn one during vacation, I am willing you should hunt this fall."

I now had an object to work for, and I bent all my energies to the task. I kept an eye open for opportunities to earn money and saved every cent I earned. Like everything else in life that

one starts out determined to accomplish, I was surprised to see how easy it was to win the goal. Early one September morning I counted the contents of my savings bank and found I had just enough money to pay for a little single-barrel in a down town store window that I had been keeping an eye on all summer. My hard-earned hoard was soon in the till of the hardware man, and I was the happy possessor of my first gun.

The next day I loaded up my pockets with a bottle of shot, a flask of powder and a box of G. D. caps, shouldered the little gun, and made a short-cut for the old pond. On getting near the place, I crept cautiously through the thicket toward the water. There was an old dead stub of a tree, standing a little distance from the edge of the thicket and only a few feet away from the water. I felt confident that, if I could reach this point without being seen, I was sure of a shot—their favorite resort about that time of day being not more than thirty yards from the stump. In order to gain this point, I had to cross an open space, covered only with a short growth of wire grass. On reaching this open ground I took off my straw hat, dropped down on my stomach, and, pushing the gun ahead of me, wriggled along slowly toward the coveted hiding place. It was tedious work, and it seemed as though I would never reach it. The occasional Quack! quack! of a duck, floating to my ears from over the water, did not serve to quiet my nerves any, and, when I at last gained the cover, it was a very tired and excited boy that peered out from behind the old stub. Yes, there they were—the old mother and five of the young ones, but too far out for my little gun.

All true disciples of Nimrod must be imbued with an unlimited amount of patience, and on this memorable afternoon I sat and watched those ducks, with hopes alternately rising and falling, as they worked in toward my hiding place or swam away from it. Just before sunset they glided off to their island home in the middle of the pond and I had to give it up and go home for the night. I suspect my face showed failure, even if my heart did not acknowledge it; for, on arriving home, father

inquired, "Well, Will—what luck?" On telling him of my poor success, he consoled me by saying: "Never mind, son. It is very evident that those ducks have been shot at since you last visited them. You say that there are now only five of the young ones, while there were six all summer; the missing one was likely shot by some passing hunter from the cover of the thicket, and they have become shy and keep away from it during the day. If you will get there some morning before daylight, you will be certain to get a shot at them when they work "in to feed." The next morning was cold and raw, but I was in my hiding place before it was fairly light. I could hear the ducks diving and splashing in the water, as they gradually worked in toward the shore. Just as the sun was creeping up behind the hills across the pond, I raised up carefully and peeked through the tops of the rice and cat-tails. There they were—near enough for a shot, but getting very uneasy. Throwing the little gun to my shoulder, I caught a quick aim and pulled the trigger, just in time to catch them before they got on the wing. What was my surprise to see two of them remain on the water—one dead and the other so badly wounded it could not get away. I was in full swimming costume in about a minute, paying no heed to mud, water or cold—and when I swam back to shore with those two ducks I was the proudest boy in the beautiful Prairie State. The fact that I had earned my gun and ammunition and killed my ducks alone added much to the pleasure. I visited the old pond many times during the fall, and got several ducks and many grey squirrels from the nearby woods; but never again did I experience quite the same thrill of pleasure from any successful shot as I did from that which brought me my first pair of mallards.

—Sports Afield.

Memories of the Old Bridge.

Last year we made a short visit to my boyhood home, the beautiful little town of Manchester, Iowa.

As we glided noiselessly in an automobile over the modern steel bridge that now spans the river, my thoughts wandered back to other days, when the heavy farm wagons used to go rattling over the loose planks of the old wooden-pile bridge.

The new structure is beautiful and desirable, and yet the old bridge of boyhood days has a warm spot in my memory which can never be supplanted by the more modern structure. For as a barefoot boy I trudged over it, swinging the cane pole that was soon to tremble with the struggles of redhorse or bass pulled out of the riffles or deep holes above the old bridge.

Oh, those dear old bygone summer days! As I leaned over the quiet waters I saw reflected there a laughing face and curly head crowned with an old battered straw hat, made from oat straw and braided by mother.

Down a little closer, and shading my eyes from the morning sun with a brown hand—yes, there he is, the giant black bass that has evaded my snare so many times. The brass wire

is dropped quietly into the water and worked down carefully toward him. The world seems to hang in the balance as I work the wire down toward those lazily opening and closing gills. And then, bitter disappointment, just as the wire loop reaches his nose, he makes a dash for midstream and is gone.

This experience afforded splendid preparation, though on a small scale, for coming events in Curlyhead's life when ideals would melt away like morning mists on the old Maquoketa.

Strange how some little event of early boyhood will go with one and influence him through an entire life.

My experience with the giant bass of the old Maquoketa was a demand on my inventive genius and skill and preseverance that I had never been called upon to meet before, and did more to develop in me those qualities than any other incident of my early life.

For weeks I invented and tried new ways and new tackle, only to meet with failure. Well do I remember the warm June morning when success crowned my efforts.

A heavy fog hung over the stream and the sun looked like a big ball of fire as it floated in the haze above the tree tops. As I approached the favorite haunt of the old bass, the fog drifted away before the morning breeze. Peering into the depths of the dark water I discovered my old acquaintance lying under the edge of a sunken log.

Dropping the snare in above him, I guided it slowly down stream along the old log toward his nose. Never will I forget the thrill of pleasure that shot through me as the brass wire passed those gently fanning fins. A quick, firm jerk of the pole set the snare on the bronze backed warrior, and the fight was on. The pole bent in the shape of an arch as he tore through the water in circles, trying to free himself from the wire.

In one of his mad rushes the pole broke. Nothing daunted, I plunged into the stream and swam after the pole, which was slowly moving across the river toward a deep hole on the other side. I soon overtook the pole, and I got my second thrill that memorable morning when my hand grasped the broken pole

and I found my captive still safely anchored to the other end of the line.

Swimming to shore I crawled upon the bank dragging my trophy with me. To say that I was proud of my achievement would be putting it mildly.

I had glory enough for one day and stringing my bass on a willow I made a short-cut for town.

This is only one among many pleasant memories that send my thoughts back to other days—to early spring rambles along the river in search of the first violet, and evenings spent in rowing or trolling for bass.

How the mossy bogs did quake as I tip-toed carefully out on them to reach the beautiful fragrant water lilies!

And then those August and September days when I followed old Sport over hill and vale after prairie chickens and quail. But most distinct in all these pleasant memories of the old bridge and river is my capture of the big black bass.

A Day on the Maquoketa.

"Hello, Doc! Get a move on you! It's almost 5 o'clock and we should be at the Quaker Mill right now, if we expect to get any bass today." Such was the greeting fired at me from the door by my old chum Arthur Green who was impatiently awaiting me to join him on a proposed fishing trip to the mill. I jumped into my fishing togs as fast as possible, got together my tackle, minnow bucket and lunch, and we were off.

It was one of those beautiful October mornings so common in Northern Iowa during the Indian summer season, and as we turned off Franklin Street and entered Acre's Grove I could not but be thankful for the spark of Waltonian fire within me which called me out on such a glorious morning. Chatting merrily as we tramped along the sandy road, we found ourselves on the bank of Honey Creek before we realized it. Here was where we expected to fill our minnow pails. Taking off our shoes and rolling up our trousers, we made a swing around below the bar with our little seine and scooped up a fine lot of minnows. Hiding our seine in the willows, we were off for the mill. It was but a fifteen minutes' walk to the pond, and storing our outfit in the old flat-bottomed boat, we were ready for the day's sport.

Successful bass fishing is an art, even when the streams are full of them, and the novice frequently comes home after a hard day's work, tired and worn out, with an empty string—the bass upon which he doted being most conspicuous by their absence. The most essential things necessary to lure the bronze-backed beauties from their haunts are good lively minnows, good tackle, a steady boat and, last but not least, a cool head and patient judgment. Flattering ourselves that we possessed all of these requisites, and reasonably assured of a good day's sport, we rowed slowly up-stream. The ground covered by the backwater of the pond had once been heavily timbered and when the high log dam was built the water had backed up

among the trees and caused them to die; therefore the pond was full of overhanging trees, dead branches, logs and stumps, partially submerged, which afforded ample cover for the big fellows who lazily loafed in their shade, expectantly waiting the coming of some venturesome minnow, prowling crawfish or unlucky frog.

The first open water we entered we laid down the paddles, put on a couple of minnows and tossed them overboard. Arthur was the lucky fellow and hardly had his minnow struck the water before his line started for the log dam, but he struck too quick and lost both bait and bass. We were anxious to reach a spot near the head of the pond where Crosby (our champion bass-fisher that season) had been catching some big ones. So we pulled in our lines and paddled on up-stream. A half-hour's rowing brought us to the spot, and, gently slipping the anchor over the side of the boat, we put on minnows and settled down to the morning's sport.

It fell to my lot to get the first strike this time. With fairly good aim I sent my minnow close in by an old half-rotten log and anxiously awaited results. There was a miniature whirlpool, the line straightened out and then went spinning away at a lively rate. Mindful of Arthur's experience at the dam, I waited until I knew that the greedy fellow had taken the minnow well in his mouth; then, with a sharp pull, I sent the hook home. For a moment he seemed paralyzed with surprise and came to the surface so willingly that I thought I had hooked a small one, but was soon deceived. As if awakened to the peril of the situation, he turned and made a bolt for a mass of brush at the far end of the log. I held my breath for a moment for fear he would tangle and get away; however, I managed to catch him before he reached the danger post and turned him out into the stream. I gave him all the line he wanted and was prepared to pay any draft he made upon my well filled reel. Up and down, back and across the stream he went—darting for the roots when he felt the least slack. Once I thought I had lost him, but he was only sulking and was off

again, making the water boil in his frantic effort to rid himself of the hook. At last his spurts were weaker; the narrowing circles of his runs indicated surrender and I gently began to reel him in; but he was not yet on the string, for, as I was about landing him, he broke away again and renewed the battle. But this was his last struggle and I soon had the flopping beauty safe in the bottom of the boat. I was proud of my achievement and well I might be, for he was one of the largest bass I ever caught. After admiring and commenting on his beauty, size and gameness, we turned our attention to the business of the day, and it was not long before each of us had landed his bass and was clamoring for a chance at the minnow bucket. We fished until the sun reached the noonday mark in the heavens; then ate our lunch and reluctantly turned back to the landing place, with one of the finest strings of bass I ever saw. We were thoroughly satisfied with the morning's sport, and as we trudged slowly home through the woods, with our heavy string of fish, the contented look upon our faces bore mute but eloquent testimony of that perfectly delightful day spent on the old Quaker Mill Pond.

—Sports Afield.

An Evening's Fishing.

There are but few of us old veterans of the field and stream that have not hundreds of pleasant reminiscences of our days afield carefully stored away for future reference; and when we are sick, or want to throw business cares off our mind, we get a good, comfortable position, close our eyes to shut out the world, and live these old bygones over again.

"It is not all of hunting to hunt,
Nor all of fishing to fish."

Every pleasant day's shooting or fishing is lived over and over again by the true lover of these sports, and enjoyed with the same zest every time.

I remember an evening's sport which I had with a black bass years ago, on the Maquoketa River, at Hopkinton, Iowa, which stands out as boldly in memory as though it occurred but yesterday. I was filling a professional appointment in the city, and during my stay took meals at Charley Colyer's restaurant. On coming out from dinner one day I noticed a quantity of spoon-hooks displayed in the showcase, and I inquired if he had any sale for them.

"The fishing here is not very good," he replied, "and there is probably not a person in the place that knows how to use a spoon-hook."

I told him I would hitch up my horse after supper, and he and I would drive down by the mill and try some of his spoon-hooks. The sun, half an hour high, found us on the banks of the stream, with my tackle brought out and got ready. It consisted of a long, limber Mississippi cane, plain cotton chalk line, tea lead sinker, and one of those aforementioned spoon-hooks. The sun had just reached the top of the hill in the west; the shadows of the big cottonwoods on the opposite shore were beginning to creep to the edge of the stream; the chilly breath of a fall evening was beginning to be felt by the winged insects hovering over the stream, causing them to drop benumbed to the water. The dace, shiners and small bass were on the watch

for these unfortunates and immediately took them in out of the cold. I watched in vain for the splash of an old settler, but saw nothing to indicate his presence, except plenty of water and feed—and why should I expect to find any here when everybody says the stream is "fished out?" Glancing up and down the stream I noticed, on my left, about ten feet from the shore, an old stump around which a lot of brush and driftwood had lodged. The water looked very deep; altogether it was a very bassy looking piece of stream. I examined my tackle to see if everything was in shape and, stepping out on the extreme point, began casting so as to troll the spoon in just above the edge of the driftwood. I made two casts without any response from below, but at the third, just as the spoon passed the old stump, there was a rush, a splash, and away went the spoon to the bottom. It did not take long to find out that I was fast to an old bronze-backer, and he was making a strong fight against my light cane to reach his home among the roots. After a short, fierce fight of about fifteen minutes, the old fellow gave up and came to land. He was a beautiful, plump black bass of the small-mouth variety, weighing three pounds.

Another cast, and I was fast to the oldest inhabitant. Round and round he went, the light cane bending in a semi-circle and the line cutting the water with a swish—the music that entrances all lovers of this sport. After a hard fight he got away with one of my hooks in his jaw as a memento of our meeting. At this stage of the performance it got too interesting for Charley, and he said:

"Hold on there, Doc, I will tie the horse to the pasture fence, and go down on the point below and help land those big fellows."

I cast again and hooked another large one, which took the same short-cut for the roots; but that limber cane was too much for the old fellow and after a few minutes' hard fight he gave up and I slowly trolled him to Charley, who grasped the line and flipped him out. The fish gave a dying kick and dropped into a puddle of water. Down went Charley onto him

with both hands, the mud and water flying all over him, but he won the battle and triumphantly strung a five-pound bass with his mates.

Thus the sport went on until we had five beauties on the grass, and probably lost seven or eight others on account of inferior tackle. How the natives' eyes opened when we took the string of fish out of our buggy in front of the restaurant! Everyone had to see them weighed, so they were placed on the scales and down they went to eighteen pounds. Everybody was surprised to see five such fish taken from the river so near town, and so ended one of the finest evening's fishing that I ever enjoyed.

—American Field.

"Another cast and the spoon dropped lightly on the water."

The Big Pike.

Coming across the picture shown in this article reminded me of a fishing episode that I played second part in several years ago on a beautiful little stream in Iowa.

Many lovers of field and stream remember the big days in their shooting and fishing outings, on account of the big bags connected therewith. I admit, I am somewhat prone to the same weakness, but the evening's fishing in question was one of the exceptions.

I had been visiting the little town of H—— for several years in the practice of my profession, and while on one of these periodical visits was sitting at the supper table in the cafe, when I overheard the following conversation in the ad-

joining salesroom: An old fellow that bottomed chairs for the hotels and groceries around town dropped in saying, "Charlie, don't Doc make his visit here this week?"

Charlie—"Yes; do you want some work done?"

Old C. B.—"No; but the boys are having a great time with a big pike down at the dam. Old W—— has had hold of him twice this week, and he smashed his tackle all to pieces and got away. Jingo! but I would like to see Doc hooked to him, with that little rod of his."

After delivering himself of this bit of news, old C. B. sauntered out, and the instant the door closed on him good old Charlie C—— came in to put me "on." I told him I heard the talk, and that just as soon as I swallowed the last mouthful, we would go down to the dam and interview Mr. Pike.

It was a good mile walk to the stream, and the long shadows had crept across the deep pool where the old veteran lived when we reached the bank.

I looked the ground over carefully, in order to lay plans for the battle, if successful in hooking him, and this is about the way I summed it up:

I believe the old fellow lives in that dark water, under those over-hanging willows, among those roots and snags. If he finds himself fast, his first break will be for the open water on the further side; failing in this, he will make a rush for his home among the roots, and that is where I must head him off.

Jointing my little lancewood, I strung the line, put on a heavy casting spoon, and was ready to send out my challenge.

The first cast fell a little short, but reeling in slowly across the swift water, I thought I saw a wake, and keeping my eye on the bait until it got in front of me, where the sun struck the water, I got a glimpse of the old fellow as he turned away from the spoon. I was prepared to see a large fish, but his size startled me, and caused a creepy sensation to crawl up the back of my neck. I had fished the stream for twenty years, but had never seen a fish half the size.

Another cast, and the spoon dropped lightly on the water just under the willow. My! what a splash as he cleared the water with the spoon in his mouth! How that little Chubb rod did bend to the work! Out went the line as he struck for the open water. A little more pressure on the reel and he leaped clear out of the water and, making a sudden turn, rushed for the roots. It required quick work with the crank to recover the line and check him. But a few feet of grace were left when I got him on the spring of the rod again. With a few vicious shakes of the head he turned and dashed out again 150 feet. The line was getting short, and I raised the tip and made an effort to head him back. Gently I worked him in, as I felt him weakening and that the battle was won. I got glimpses of his black back as he shot through the water this way and that way, fighting desperately for his liberty.

When within twenty-five feet of the dam he made a sudden dive for the willow and, jumping clear of the water again, shook the hook free of his mouth.

Well! he was a big fish and a hard fighter. I was obliged to use a great deal of force to keep him from getting among the snags. Very likely he was but slightly hooked, and my frail hold on him had torn out, by the great force put on the line.

Thus I figured it out to myself, but never felt satisfied that there was not a little carelessness mixed up in my defeat. I made a few more forlorn casts, hoping the old fellow would give me another chance, but he seemed to be better satisfied than I was. Sadly I reeled up my line, and slowly we wended our way along the shore toward the village. I had but little to say, but dear old Charlie tried to make me believe I had handled him all right, and that his loss was no discredit to me.

This was over twenty years ago, but I often live it all over again, and enjoy the fight almost as much as I did on that memorable evening on the banks of the Maquoketa.

—Outdoor Life.

286190

A Novel Muskrat Hunt.

Sitting alone in my library tonight, my thoughts ramble back to a time more than twenty-five years ago, and this turn of memory's wheel brings to view the records of a few weeks spent in Calhoun County, Iowa. It was some time early in the month of March and I drifted into the little prairie town of Lake City, in Western Iowa. The term "drifted" is well suited to the occasion; for, as the train whirled along towards the end of my railroad journey, I looked out of the car window across the boundless level prairie to the northward and it appeared as though at least one-half of the country was under water. I had written to a Lake City party to have a team meet me at the nearest railroad station, knowing that the stage only made the trip once a week, and when I stepped off the train at Carroll I found my man waiting for me at the end of the platform, with a good, strong spring wagon and a pair of big mules. I immediately began to kick on the mule part of the outfit, as, at that time, I harbored a sort of grudge against these long-eared slurs on horseflesh, but the driver said, "Why, man, there isn't a horse team in the state that could take us through that twenty miles of mud, water and slough in as good shape as these little mules. Why, I can drive them through a slough where there is nothing but long grass to walk on and only their ears in sight." And before we reached our destination I found that my Jehu's judgment was good and the little long ears as good as his judgment.

Striking out across the trackless prairie, we stuck to the highest ground as much as possible, but, even then, were at least a third of the time in water. Several times the mules were off their feet and had to swim for it; but they showed no fear and never refused to go where guided. We drove up to the hotel in Lake City at 9 o'clock that night a cold hungry pair, but a hot supper and a good bed put me in shape; and when I looked out of my little window the next morning while dress-

ing, and saw several flocks of mallards circling over a pond a half mile away, my prospective stay in the little village looked much brighter than on the night before. I was late getting down to the dining room, and, while waiting for my breakfast order, I noticed a bright young man across the table from me that I at once took a liking to, and, when he commenced to talk gun and shoot, it was not long before an attachment sprang up between us. This gentleman (whom I will call Steve) was teacher of the town school and proved to be one of the most jovial companions and best shots that I ever struck up an acquaintance with.

As the days lengthened, the ducks, geese and cranes came in from the south by thousands; the ponds and prairie were covered with them, and wherever there was a piece of burnt land a flock of white cranes could be seen grazing over it—looking at a distance like a flock of sheep. To get a bag of ducks in that locality was an easy matter, as there were but few fields and consequently but few feeding grounds for them to resort to. But to stalk those white and sandhill cranes on the open prairie and get within range was not an easy matter. Many a time have I crawled over the wet, soggy prairie for a half mile—only to have them get up just out of range.

One evening, as I sat dozing over the stove in the little hotel office, Steve rushed in, saying, "I just saw a farmer over at the store. He says the ice is going out of the big slough and there's great muskrat shooting. Be ready for an early start in the morning. Don't forget to have a good lunch put up and have the little rifle ready. Good night! Be sure and be ready."

The team was at the door in the morning by the time I had breakfast, and we were soon on the road to the shooting ground. When fairly started I told Steve that if I had not had a good deal of confidence in him I should never have started out on such a trip, as the idea of shooting muskrats for sport reminded me very much of a snipe hunt I once took part in, in which I was given the post of first bag-holder. Steve

looked up laughingly and replied, "I see, old fellow. You think I am playing a joke on you. But it's plain you don't know anything about this kind of shooting. You see, the muskrats in this country live in houses on the big sloughs during the winter, and when the ice breaks up in the spring they go down the outlets with the floating ice to the river, where they pair off for the summer season. These outlets are thirty or forty rods wide in the spring when the water is high, and, with the wind blowing hard, it is not an easy matter to shoot a muskrat off one of these bobbing cakes of ice with a rifle."

Reaching the slough, we stopped near the outlet and put up our team with a farmer. Steve got the farmer's boy and dog to go with us; the farmer to skin the rats (for their hides) and the latter to retrieve them from the water when killed. Jumping into an old skiff, Steve paddled over to the other side, leaving the boy with me (to initiate me into the mysteries of rat shooting). Selecting a sheltered place, we made a blind for ourselves out of dead rushes and grass, and, crouching down behind it, waited for our game to come along. We hadn't been long in our blind before the boy nudged me, and, pointing up stream, said:

"There comes one—on that little cake of ice. He is yours, because he's nearest your side of the stream." Looking away out over the water in the direction the boy pointed, I saw a small cake of ice bobbing along over the water with a little dark spot on it that one would never think was a muskrat. Raising the rifle to my shoulder, I took a careful aim at the object and pulled the trigger; the dark spot slipped off the ice at the crack of the gun and disappeared beneath the waves. The next passenger fell to the lot of Steve, and, at the crack of his little .22, it rolled off its perch, gave a few expiring kicks, and floated quietly on down-stream. When it came opposite our blind the dog plunged into the icy water and soon returned with a big sleek muskrat in his mouth, which the boy took charge of—deftly removing the little animal's warm winter coat.

For an hour or two the sport was lively, one crack following another in quick succession, first from Steve's blind and then from mine—the shooting being about equally divided. Then the wind began getting stronger and colder, the waves livelier, the shooting more difficult, the game more wary and our shots more scattering. No more rats being in sight, I crawled down behind the blind, to get out of the raw wind. My little partner looked up at me, enquiringly, and said: "Say, Mister, I guess you never shot muskeys any before, 'cause you don't shoot like Mr. C. over there. He don't shoot till the ice cakes get into a quiet piece of water, so they won't wobble—then he gets his muskey most every time. My! but I tell you us boys make it lively for the muskeys while they are on the Big Slough. They commence gathering rushes and building their houses as soon as they come up from the river and as soon as they get their houses done we begin trapping them and trap until the slough freezes over; then we go after them with spears."

Here I interrupted the little man and enquired what he meant by spearing muskrats. "Why, didn't you ever spear muskeys? Well, I'll tell you, it's just lots of fun. When the ice is thick enough to bear, we take our spears and an axe, and, going to a likely-looking house, two of the boys with spears stand nearby where they can watch in all directions, while the other one pounds on the house with an axe to drive the muskeys out. They swim along close under the ice and we chugs the spear through the thin ice and pins 'em fast. Do you see that cake coming down with two of 'em on?" Sure enough, there they were—two big fellows on one small cake and close enough together to offer a chance for a double. At the crack of my gun both rolled into the water; but what was my surprise when Steve rose in his blind and shouted across: "Say, old man, what do you think of my double?" We had both fired so close together that it had sounded like a single report.

We had a few more shots—some of which we missed and some of which were more successful; but, at length, the rising

wind so increased the size of the waves that the rats stopped running for the day. Consulting my watch, I was surprised to find it was noon, and, calling the time of day across to Steve, he loaded his rats in the skiff and paddled over. Counting the pelts, we found we had twenty-six to show for our morning's sport, and I doubt if I ever averaged one kill out of ten shots. Taking our lunch up to the farm-house, we got some hot coffee, and, after a good dinner, started on the homeward drive. I had to acknowledge to Steve that the shooting had been difficult enough to be interesting, and I certainly have him to thank for one of the most novel and pleasant day's sport of my life.

—Sports Afield.

A Rabbit Hunt on the Prairie.

It is a cold, dreary evening. Storm clouds are scudding down from the north, shutting out the last rays of the declining light, as the gloomy October night closes in on the city. The bright sparkle of the electric lights here and there only serves to increase the gloom beyond their circle of radiance. Out of the darkness comes the screech of a steam whistle, the rattle of omnibus and dray, the rumble of the cable cars, the bark of a dog and the gabble of human voices—sounds of city life that grate harshly on the ear of one who loves nature and her ways. Turning away from the window in disgust, I poke the center log nearer the fire's heart and allow imagination to carry me away from these disagreeable surroundings.

I see a pretty white cottage, standing on a rise of ground back from the shore of a beautiful little lake in Northern Iowa. The trailing morning glory that covers the cozy little porch shuts out the rays of the declining sun that are reflected from the glassy surface of the lake. It is the month of October. I am comfortably seated in a shady corner of the porch, dreamily enjoying the scene, the beautiful sunset and listening to the voices of approaching night. The chirp of the cricket from under the step at my feet, the cry of a night-hawk, as he darts downward in his circling flight overhead, the bullfrog chorus that floats up from the lake shore, the uneasy twitter of the birds in the trees, the hoot of an owl over on the point—all tell the tale of the day's close and the dropping of night's curtain.

"Hello, Will! What are you hiding in there for? Don't you want to go rabbit hunting tomorrow?"

"Well, George, I guess you almost caught me building air castles in Fairyland. Yes, I'm ready for anything that promises sport, for my time with you is getting short."

"All right, Will. I will be around with the team before sunrise; be ready and have a lunch put up."

A Rabbit Hunt on the Prairie.

The sun is just peeping over the hills in the east as I climb into the wagon beside George in the early morning. The night has been cold, the air is sharp and frosty; the grass rustles under the horses' feet as we drive across the prairie towards the big slough. I notice that George has a hired man and boy on the front seat, a roll of smooth fence-wire in the wagon and an extra horse leading behind. I figure it out that he is going to do some work on the pasture fence, and is taking the wire and hired help along for that purpose. On arriving at the lower end of the big slough, the team is stopped, one end of the wire is fastened to the whiffletree of the single horse, the boy takes the horse by the bit and leads him across the swale—running out 150 feet of the wire; then he is headed in the same direction and abreast of the team. I could not curb my curiosity any longer; so inquired of George what this means and what it has to do with our proposed rabbit hunt.

"Well, Will, I see you are green in this business, so I'll have to give you a few pointers. In the first place, we are not going to do any hunting, but we are going to make the rabbits do the hunting. Go over on the other side of the slough and walk about ten feet ahead of the single horse and I will walk ahead of the team; keep a sharp lookout, and take care of all the game that that gets up in front of your half of the wire. When we start the horses, the wire will wake up all the game between us and make them hunt a new locality; so look out for almost anything—and don't get rattled."

The drivers start up the horses, and the hunt is on. A cottontail springs from the grass, and, at the crack of George's little 16-bore, rolls over and is tossed into the wagon.

"Hold on!" said I. "Look! Look!"

"Give it to him!" says George, "that's a jack-rabbit."

I was carrying my gun at ready, and, bringing it quickly to my shoulder, sent a charge of shot after the flying jack; but I shot behind him, and he circled across toward George, who neatly bowled him over. George asked me if I had ever seen a jack before, and I told him I had been on a hunt in Kansas

many years ago and shot several, but it had been so long since I had seen one that this fellow looked as big as a calf to me. A few minutes after the jack-rabbit incident I met with another surprise. I was tramping along through the tall grass—thinking of the big jack I had missed—when just ahead of me and all around my feet there arose, with booming of wings, a large covey of full-grown prairie-chickens. I didn't get rattled this time, for I had been hunting these fellows for two weeks, and, selecting my birds, dropped a pair in good shape. We were now at the end of the slough, and, crossing over a hill to the south, struck the head of another. This one, though much smaller than the one we had just hunted, had a very heavy growth of grass and furnished better shooting. Rabbits got up every few rods, and, being so suddenly aroused from their mid-day siesta, would make a jump or two, and then stop to recover from their surprise—offering the finest kind of a shot. We struck a piece of heavy grass near the head of the slough, and as the wire went into it, up went a flock of nearly a hundred chickens. They divided, part crossing in front of George, and the rest of the flock swinging around in close range of me; but, while George dropped his pair in good style, I had to be content with one bird and a hatful of feathers. This was the last shot of the day, and when we reached the high ground we pulled up in the shelter of a big hay-rick for dinner. Unhitching the team, we tied them to the wagon, pulled some hay from the stacks for them, spread our lunch on the grass, and enjoyed a meal as only hungry hunters can enjoy, with the sauce of a successful hunt for an appetizer.

"Well, Will," says George, "how do you like this kind of hunting?"

"Well, George, I don't think I ever enjoyed a better morning's shoot in my life. There is a peculiar charm about it, owing to the fact that you never know what kind of game you are going to flush, where it is going to get up or where it is going to go."

A Rabbit Hunt on the Prairie.

After finishing our lunch, we loaf around in the warm October sun and talk over the hits and misses of the morning, until 3 o'clock, when we hitch up and start across the prairie for home. As we jog along towards the little cottage on the lake where I have made my home during my two weeks' vacation, a feeling of sadness creeps over me, for I cannot help reading the signs that are all around and about me. The haze of Indian summer, the shaggy tops of the golden-rod, the little white bunches of gum on the resin-weed, and the sharp frosty nights and mornings, all tell the tale. It is the last dying effort of summer. Winter will soon be with us and spread her mantle of white over these brown prairies, and another long year must roll around, with its humdrum life and hard work, before I can again visit this charmed spot and enjoy the health-giving sports of lake and stubble. Many years have passed since that day's rabbit hunt; but never do the closing days of October roll around without my recalling all the incidents of that novel hunt.

—Sports Afield.

"A comfortable position on the old butternut."

A Day With the Squirrels.

I have never been able to explain satisfactorily to myself why it is that scenes and incidents transpiring in the early days of my life remain as fresh in memory and are more vivid today than they were twenty years ago. Very likely it is because "the morning of life is full of purity, imagery and harmony." Be that as it may, we know that as we advance in years the scenes and incidents of early life come back to us as fresh and well defined as though they occurred but yesterday.

Times have changed and many matters of far greater importance have taken place in my life since that autumn

day when George and I enjoyed the hunt that I shall make a weak attempt to describe; but every incident connected with it is as fresh in my mind as though it were but yesterday. We had decided to take a trip up the creek after gray squirrels, which were reported to be unusually abundant in our section of the country that year. I had spent the evening with George at his home, and it was arranged that we should meet on the bank of the creek above my home the next morning at daylight, row up to the old spring in our skiff and begin our hunt from there. When I arrived at the place of rendezvous I soon discovered that I was the first on hand, so I took a seat on an old stump and enjoyed the awakening of day while waiting for George to show up. It was an ideal September morning, and how distinctly I remember it! How invigorating the fresh, crisp, frosty morning air was! All was quiet except the crickets chirping among the willows along the bank and the continual murmurs of the waters of the creek, as they rippingly flowed over their rocky bed at my feet.

Soon gray streaks appeared in the east, gradually expanding and changing into colors of brighter hue. As the day advanced the chirping of the crickets gave way to the more melodious warblings of the songsters in the surrounding trees as they awakened with the day. What a morning to send the blood tingling through the veins of a sportsman and a lover of nature, and make him feel happy and thankful for the privilege of enjoying such a morning out in the country, away from the stifling, smoke-tainted air of the city. The sun was already making its appearance over the hill on the other side of the creek when George came in sight, with his gun over his shoulder and his boat paddle in his hand.

"Hello, old man! Is this what you call daybreak?" said I, as he stopped on the bank beside me.

"Well, Will, I couldn't help it; I set the alarm clock for three, but I don't believe it went off."

"Well, old fellow, I am going to take your word for that, as I am sure you like hunting as well as I do, and I know you are hunter enough to be aware of the fact that the early sun gets the game, when after the little grays, so let us be off."

A delightful half hour's row landed us at the old spring, and pulling our boat up on the sandy point, we stowed the lunch and coats away under the seats, and were soon wending our way up the steep hill toward the heavy timber. Reaching the top of the hill, we stopped, and turning around, looked down on the little stream at our feet, and our eyes followed its winding course until it disappeared among the brown hills in the distance, a mere thread of silver. Oh, what a picture! To one who is not a lover and worshipper of nature it is useless to attempt a description of such scenes, but to one who is a lover of God's outdoors, every such experience draws him nearer to the Creator.

George awakened me from my day dream with "Come on, Will; I love these panoramic studies of nature as much as you do; but we will have to move on if we get any game today." We turned to the left down an old wood road toward some walnut and hickory trees farther up the ridge. We had gone but a few rods, when I espied a gray squirrel perched on a limb near the top of a big hickory. I raised my gun quickly and fired; just as he leaped to another tree, disappearing in a hole, and I scored a clean miss.

"Well, you are a dandy, Will; I thought you could shoot," exclaimed George.

"Don't crow until you get out of the woods, George, for you are liable to have a miss or two to your credit before night," I replied.

We then separated, agreeing to meet at the boat for lunch. I struck off into the deep wood, visiting my favorite old squirrel trees, and though I found quite a number of the little reds, I found nothing that wore a coat of fur the color I was looking for. I had been tramping nearly an hour, and had heard

the report of George's old twelve-bore several times, before I got another shot. Approaching a large walnut, I heard a rustling in the leaves behind the tree. Suddenly a big fellow darted from behind the tree and started up it like a gray streak. This time when my gun cracked the squirrel dropped; picking him up I smoothed down the sleek fur and slipped him into my pocket. As I did so a nut dropped from the tree over my head, and glancing up, I saw another squirrel making for a hole near the top of the same tree; but he was out of sight before I was able to cover him. I knew he had left his breakfast unfinished, and would be sure to come out again as soon as he thought the coast was clear, so I took a seat on an old crooked butter-nut, where I had a good view of the hole, and awaited developments. In a short time his squirrelship poked his nose out of the hole, and not seeing anything to frighten him, he emerged from his retreat, and leaped to a limb on a nearby tree. Almost the same instant that he struck the limb my gun cracked and squirrel number two was added to my bag. I had learned by experience, long before, not to do too much hunting when out after this kind of game in the fall during the nut season. It is much better to find a good location, where there are plenty of nuts, some good squirrel trees, and then sit down, keep quiet, and let the squirrels do the hunting. I have often gone into the woods with others, and by following this plan got a fine string of squirrels; while they would tramp around all day, and at night, have a very small bag to show for their hard day's hunt. I saw that I was myself in a comfortable position on the old butter-nut again, and was ready to give the first gray a warm welcome, that might be bold enough to toss me a nervous good morning.

The sun had climbed up above the tree tops, and was stealing down through the branches and scattering leaves; dodging here and there, like a child playing at hide-and-seek. From where I was sitting I could look across the creek val-

ley to the hills on the other side, and enjoy all the beauties of the autumn foliage, as it shaded up from the bank of the creek to the top of the hill, the flaming colors of the maples, thrown into relief by the green surrounding them and shaded off into restful effects by the orange yellow of the hickories higher up, and winding diagonally to the top of the hill, was an old worm-fence, bordered on either side by a fringe of deep red sumach, beautifully setting off this lovely autumn picture. But a rustle in the leaves aroused me from contemplation, and, turning my head, I caught a glimpse of a sly old gray as he darted around to the opposite side of a burr oak, on his way to the top. Nor did he stop until the topmost branch was reached. There he balanced himself on a springing limb, like an acrobat, hesitated a second, and leaped to a big walnut. The branch swayed under his weight as he struck it, and before he could recover to run, I got a snap shot at him. Stowing him away with his mates, I went back to my seat, cocked the gun and was ready for the next one. I hadn't been quiet more than ten minutes before a walnut dropped through the branches from over my head, and, casting my eyes upward, I saw a gray tail hanging down over a large limb. I knew the owner must be close by, and, getting my gun in position, I kept a close watch on the spot. In a short time a little nose came cautiously out from behind the limb. I covered it, and as the top of the head appeared I pulled the trigger, and my fourth squirrel came tumbling down through the limbs, almost striking me on the head. The sun had climbed to that position in the heavens that marks the dinner hour, and the inner man was demanding attention, so I lay my course for the boat to meet George.

I found him sitting on an old log waiting for me, and when I came up, I inquired what luck.

"I got three, but I got all I saw."

"I can beat you one, George. Just take a look at these four beauties."

We spread our eatables out on a big flat rock near the spring, and went at it as only two hungry hunters can. How we did enjoy that bread and butter, cold ham and pickles, with good, pure water for drink, and delicious frosted grapes —picked from the vine over our heads—for dessert. No pampered son of wealth ever enjoyed a meal at Delmonico's as we did that simple lunch, out there on the sunny hillside, reclining on our couch of leaves. After lunch we lay around and chatted until the declining sun warned us that we must be moving toward home. We picked up our duffle, loaded it into the boat and pushed her off the shore. There was a soft, balmy breeze blowing from the south, just enough to raise a little ripple on the water, that beat a soothing lullaby against the prow of the boat, as we drifted and paddled lazily along with the current. We were in no hurry; so lay back on the seats enjoying the lovely Indian summer afternoon to our heart's content, pulling up at the landing near my house about 6 o'clock, tired, but satisfied and happy, as true sportsmen always are at the close of a successful day in the wood or on the stream.

I have spent many happy days with rod and gun, in the lovely lake-park country lying between Forest City, Ia., and Waterville, Minn., and although I have fished and hunted in many other sections of the country, yet, when the hot days of summer come, and I get tired of business, tired of eating and tired of everything else, I turn my eyes wistfully toward this land of lovely lakes, beautiful streams and grand old woods—the place where George and I spent a day with the squirrels.

—Omaha World-Herald.

My First Ride on an Ice Boat.

It may be a bit of landscape, a gun, dog, rod, boat, or a wild stormy day, that awakens the echoes in the cob-webbed galleries of Memory's store-house and brings back to life some pleasant incident of bygone days. The cold, wintry bast that sweeps around the house corner tonight and drives against the window panes, reminds me of my first ride on an ice boat. I was spending a few weeks visiting in Wisconsin, and was stopping with a relative who kept a hotel in one of those pretty lake resort towns for which the state is noted. As is well known, these are very pleasant resorts in summer, but the dullest of places during the long winter. I had hunted, fished through the ice, skated, and taken a hand in all the winter sports of the place except ice boating. There were only two or three boats on the lake and I was afraid I would have to go away without enjoying this long-wished-for pleasure; but, having a full share of patience, I awaited my opportunity, and it came at last. I was sitting by the fire in the little village hotel, enjoying my after-breakfast cigar, one cold morning, when George W. dropped in and invited me to "take a scoot" with him across the lake on his ice boat. I quickly accepted the invitation, as it was just what I had been waiting for—for weeks. A short, brisk walk, and we were at the landing, and getting the "Flyer" ready for the trip. Things were soon made shipshape, the big white sails hoisted, and, as we slipped away from the shore, my companion told me to get down out of the way of the boom and cling to a rope that ran along the center of the boat from stern to bow.

The wind was blowing a gale from the northwest, the thermometer down to 12 degrees below zero, and the air full of snow and frost. The farther we got out on the open lake, the faster we went, until it seemed to me were flying instead of sailing. The wind hummed through the rigging, the sails

snapped, and occasionally we would strike a patch of white shell-ice, through which we would plough our way with a roar—the runners throwing a shower of broken ice into our faces with a force that was terrifying to a greenhorn. Suddenly I noticed a ribbonlike strip of open water winding across the lake, directly in our path. The crack was a long one; it was impossible to dodge it, the way we were flying, and equally impossible to stop; it seemed to me that certain death stared us in the face. If I was frightened before, I was horrified now. I thought our time had surely come, and, glancing up into George's calm face, I pointed to the crack ahead of us. His eyes were fixed on the danger, but he did not appear to be frightened. As we neared the open water, he threw the boat up into the full force of the wind, and, as the great white wings caught the gale, she fairly leaped from the ice. In an instant she cleared the chasm—landing us safely on the other side. I drew a sigh of relief and mentally resolved to walk home—but I did not. Although nearly frozen and badly scared when we reached the south side of the lake, I was so enraptured with the sport that I was just as ready for the return trip as my friend was, and never again experienced the fear I did on this initial trip. With me it was a case of love at first sight, and my only regret is that business has compelled me to live the greater part of my life where I could not enjoy this grand winter sport. I often visit lake towns, where there are the finest of opportunities for ice boating, and, on inquiry, cannot find a boat in the place—no interest whatever being taken in this, the grandest of sports on our northern lakes and rivers. Flying along at a speed more rapid than a fast express train, cutting through the keen winter air—often leaping clear of the ice and skipping fifteen or twenty feet—is a delight that entrances while it frightens the novice, and he is sure to enjoy it again at the first opportunity.

In skilled hands, an ice boat is more easily managed than the ordinary sailing craft. There are dangers that the man at the tiller cannot reckon on until they appear to him; but he keeps a sharp lookout ahead, and usually avoids them by so close a margin that it sends the cold chills creeping up the back of the passenger who is taking his first ride. The danger is not so great as might be expected from the great speed made, and is often more apparent than real. When one becomes the owner and master of one of these frail crafts, what a world of new pleasure it opens up to him! One of the prime factors in making it so fascinating is the very fact of flying past these dangers and missing them by a few feet —by a simple turn of the hand which guides your craft safely by. It cultivates a sharp eye, quickens the judgment, stimulates the daring of the young, and causes the fire of youth to tingle through the veins of the middle-aged. Ice boating is not an expensive sport—a recreation that can only be enjoyed by the rich. The boat I took my first ride on was built and rigged by the owner, and I do not think it cost him over $25.00 outside his own work. Unlike the summer sail boat, it is not necessary that an ice boat should be built by an expert on certain prescribed lines, in order to get speed out of her. The most ungainly home-made affair will carry you over the ice at a speed of nearly a mile a minute and furnish as much pleasure to its owner as a $500 yacht; but it must be strongly built, properly handled, and carry plenty of canvas. I am sorry for the one who lives away from the water, and who is so unfortunate as to be debarred the enjoyment of this king of outdoor winter sports.

The amateur will need to take his first lessons in a light breeze on open ice, as it is then easy for him to get familiar with the handling of his boat, without incurring too much danger; and if a sharp gale springs up suddenly, as is often the case on our northwestern lakes, it is better to postpone farther practice until the elements are more favorable. A

quick eye, steady nerve, and perfect confidence are absolutely essential to the full enjoyment and success of ice boating, and they can only be gained from thorough practice. While ice boat sailing has always been condemned on account of its seeming danger, a comparison of statistics will show that there are more accidents occurring to those who bicycle, swim, shoot or play foot ball than to the ice boat enthusiast.

—Sports Afield.

Old Punch.

What pleasant memories cluster around the name that heads this article! Days on the prairie after chickens, mornings and evenings hidden in a duck blind with old Punch's nose rubbing against my hand. Ye lovers of dog and gun know all about it, and I hope you may enjoy the reading of these few reminiscences as much as I do the penning of them.

My first meeting with Punch was peculiar. I was walking down the main street of the little town of Belmond, Iowa, on a hot July day. Passing a group of men on the corner, my hunting eye fell on the old dog. I noticed at once that he was a thoroughbred. As I passed the group I nodded pleasantly to the gentlemen, patting the old dog gently on the head. I had hardly proceeded a block before I felt something cold touch my hand, and, glancing down, saw my new-made canine friend trotting by my side. Such was my introduction to Punch, and the many happy days spent afield with him will always be one of memory's brightest pages.

I have, in my long experience, owned and broken many dogs; but Punch was the most intelligent, the best disposi-tioned and the most superb all-round field dog I ever owned or handled. He seemed to take to me from the very start, and from the morning of our first meeting he followed me everywhere and could not be kept at his old home without being chained to his kennel Doctor F. (his owner) met me on the street one day a week or two later and said: "Doctor Steele, I don't know what kind of a spell you have thrown around my dog, but I can't keep him at home any more and can't do anything with him. I expect to move to Arkansas soon and will leave him with you. If I never send for him, he is your dog." Thus I became the owner of the best dog I ever possessed.

The first time I went into the field with him, I found out why he had deserted his old master. A pair of chickens flushing wild in front of him, he dropped in a cringing way,

and as I came up rolled his eyes toward me and whined, expecting me to kick him. The flush was no fault of his. I patted him on the head and we followed them up. The next time they held better and both chickens dropped at the crack of my right and left barrels. At the word of command he retrieved them promptly, and as I took the last bird from his mouth and patted him on the head, Punch and I were firm friends for life.

As a general field dog for all kinds of game, he was grand. He knew the habits of most birds better than I did. One evening, as I was returning from a chicken shoot, old Punch was standing up in the buggy with his nose pointing to the windward, sniffing the breeze. As we turned the corner of a stubble field, he looked up at me and whined. Hitching the horse, I dropped in a couple of shells and followed him along the edge of the field. Soon his pace slackened; then, creeping along slowly a few steps, he stiffened out into a beautiful point. As I came up he moved up again. This was repeated several times, when a wild old cock flushed twenty-five rods ahead and sailed off over the cornfield, cackling defiance at us. A week later I was walking across the same field when Punch came to a point near the same place. I stepped up behind him and he moved forward a few steps, then, glancing back at me, he started off to the right, making a detour, and struck the edge of the field 100 rods above us. He then began working slowly back toward me. About fifty yards from where he first struck the scent he came to a dead stand; with a loud roar the wary old cock flushed in front of him and circled for the cornfield. I covered him, and just as he topped the corn the gun cracked and he dropped in the edge of the field.

Another evening, when out after ducks, we were crossing a stubble field. The ground was spongy and little pools of water stood in all the low places. As we turned the corner of a cornfield I noticed a flock of mallards drop down in the stubble. Getting in line with a row of shocks, I motioned

Punch to heel and started for them. When within twenty-five yards of the flock, they flushed and I dropped one with each barrel. The first shot was a clean kill, but the second bird was only winged. Knowing that Punch would bring in the winged bird first, I determined to test his intelligence. He came trotting in with the bird, and, looking up, wagged his tail for me to take it as usual. I stared straight ahead, as though watching the flock of mallard, but all the time I was watching him out of the corner of my eye. He stood patiently a few moments, then rubbed against my leg. At last, not getting my attention, he placed the wounded bird at my feet, and started off a few steps. Then stopped and looked back to see if I picked it up. The duck had been playing 'possum, and thinking his time had come, made a break for the high weeds. Quick as a flash, Punch was after him, and after a few minutes' trailing, caught him and brought him back. He stood looking up, wagging his tail, rubbed against my legs, and did everything possible to attract my attention, but I did not notice him. He put the bird down again on the ground, and, seizing its head in his mouth, reluctantly crushed it. Then off he went to retrieve the other bird.

Time and space will not permit me to relate more of these incidents from the life of old Punch, but a valuable lesson can be drawn from what I have related, and I earnestly hope all my young readers who expect to break field dogs may profit by it. In breaking your dog, do not break him at all, but train him. Do not make him your slave; make him rather your friend and companion. Then, in after years, like the dethroned king, you can say:

"He did not love me for my throne;
Yet was he patient, fond and brave;
He loved me for myself alone.
He was that good and gracious thing,
That rare appendage to a king—
A friend that never played the slave."

—Sports Afield.

An Old Negative.

October Afternoon on Lime Creek.

Among the choicest treasures of my den is a travel-worn camera. Once it was newer and more beautiful than now, but to me it was not nearly so beautiful in its bright factory polish as it is in its rusty coat of black. Every scratch, stain and mar record a story in a mute language known only to myself. They point silently to a row of boxes on my closet shelves; stowed away carefully in those boxes are hundreds of negatives made with this old trail-scarred veteran, each of which tells a story of happy bygone days. Sometimes, when worn and weary with the cares of business, I steal away by myself, take down these boxes and look over my treasures. Holding them up to the light one by one, I look through them into the hazy past, which they so faithfully bring back to life. Then, when they have woven their potent spell around me, they talk to me of days spent near to Nature's heart. Perhaps one of these rambles may be worth repeating, that you may know something of what these old plates tell me. Here is one that says: "Do you remember that bright October afternoon on Lime Creek? You recollect you started off with rod and camera, under the pretense of going a-fishing, but when you reached the creek bank you discovered that you only had part of your fishing tackle with you. Though but a short quarter of a mile from home, you did not return for it, but wandered on and on enchanted by the lovely autumn scenery. How beautifully the afternoon sun tinted the hillsides along the east shore of the little silvery

stream! Though you made many snap-shots of choice bits of scenery, it was impossible to portray the wondrous tints of autumn colors that lined the hillsides or the velvety green sward and mossy rim at the old spring where you ate your lunch. On and on you tramped over hill and dale, until, just as the sun touched the tree tops in the west, you reached the old foot bridge. Leaning upon the rail, you gazed down on the placid waters of the little brook. Reflected in its quiet depths were the azure-tinted heavens and fleecy clouds that drifted like shadows over its reflecting bosom." What a scene, and what a day! How precious the memories of that autumn day stroll, so plainly told by this old plate!

Now, my dear friend, do you wonder that I like my camera? I know that some of my friends think that I am a kind of a crank, because I spend so much time and money on my camera, but it is because they do not understand. They are not Nature lovers and do not understand that the camera is a means to an end.

"Oh pity those who cannot see
God's image in the flower,
Nor yet perceive the soul in song,
Nor thrill at music's power."

—Northwestern Sportsman.

A Long Ago Kansas Christmas.

An old-fashioned sort of yarn about an old-fashioned kind of Christmas; one with peace like snow, and snow like peace; on earth among the plain, simple folk on the Kansas border, and yet one of the brightest Christmas days in memory's storehouse. Back in the days of yule logs, carols and loving cups Christmas day was enjoyed with love and simplicity, as it should be. In this age of strife and competition, when one part of the world has adopted the profession of money-making and the balance of the human family are forced to the all-important duty of making enough to live on, Christmas day has lost much of its old-time tone.

This story, that smacks of simple life and pioneer days, may be worth repeating. It may be well to remember that we shall not altogether forget what the early settlers went through in developing the great prairies of the west. Western history in its entirety reads like a romance. From the pioneer with gun and ox team who first braved the dangers of the trackless desert—the midnight raids of the blood-thirsty savage, the winter onslaught of beasts of prey, and the frightful barrenness of the land itself—to the civilization of today, which sees these arid wastes transformed into fertile farms and pasture lands, the upland hills and covers where often lay in wait the painted redskin, now resounding with the hum of commercial, mining, and agricultural industry, the history of the west is enchanting as any volume of oriental life.

There is no part of it so strongly encouraging and interesting as that which relates to the triumph of man over that section of the country marked in our old geographies as the "Great American Desert." How well do I remember when a boy studying my geography lesson of picturing in my mind's eye the kind of country this was, and wondering if I could ever be fortunate enough to visit this almost unknown country of treeless plains and drifting sands.

A Long Ago Kansas Christmas.

My finances were so limited in early life that, when I completed my professional studies and located in the little town of C———, in northeastern Iowa, I was badly in debt and without money. It took hard work and close application to meet these conditions, and my third year in practice found me beginning a hard winter with a severe cold and a fair prospect of becoming an all-winter member of the "Shut-in Club." Calling my physician for advice, he delivered himself thus: "Lay down your instruments, close up the office, pack up your hunting togs and gun, and hustle yourself off to a milder climate where there is a brighter altitude and more sunshine. Take plenty of time to make the journey, and when you reach your destination, tramp and hunt—anything to saturate yourself with sunshine and keep your lungs inflated with pure air. Follow my advice and you will derive more benefit from it than from all the medicine I could give you."

No one realized better than I what it cost him to make this concluding admission; besides, if I followed his advice, it would considerably reduce the denomination of his semi-annual bill for services rendered, which had never yet failed to put in an appearance.

I had already begun to waver when the first hard storm of the season drove down from the north and clutched everything in its icy embrace. That settled it! I would go, though really I could not afford to; but then, neither could I afford not to. Already, in imagination, I could hear the report of my gun, see the rigid point of the setter, and feel the free winds of heaven sweeping across the broad prairie. After exchanging letters with friends in one of the western counties of Kansas, my plans were arranged, and two weeks later I waved farewell to my friends and was off on my first outing beyond the Missouri. The next morning when I changed cars at Atchison there were a few feathery flakes of snow in the air, but none of that wintry blast which I had left behind me the day before in Iowa. For several hours our train followed the winding of the stream

and we were hardly ever out of sight of timber, but gradually the patches of timber and farms grew scarcer and scarcer, until at last we were out on the broad Kansas prairie. Farm houses and fences had disappeared from the landscape, excepting now and then a sod house or dug-out with its inhospitable-looking barbed wire corral. All signs of winter had disappeared and the sun shone brightly. Great herds of long-horned cattle were grazing on the brown buffalo grass as contentedly as though it were mid-summer instead of mid-winter.

"This is winter, but milder
Winter than I ever knew."

As the last faint reflection of a rarely beautiful sunset faded from the sky "fair Luna sailed the heavenly sea," shining with a soft brilliancy unknown to latitudes east of the Missouri. Finally a series of shrill shrieks from our little engine announced the end of my journey, and I alighted beside a converted box car, which may have seen better days, but now masqueraded as the passenger station of G———.

Handing my baggage to the station agent, I crossed the street and "pounded up" the proprietor of the hotel, restaurant and postoffice, and was soon comfortably fixed in a bed that was a pleasant surprise to me. After an early breakfast we went over to the store, and while making a few purchases, my friend drove up with a wagon. With a hearty hand-shake and a genuine western greeting from my old friend Dave H———, we loaded in the baggage and were off for a fifteen-mile drive. There was no indication of Christmas week in the air or surroundings. It was a gloriously bright Indian summer morning, and as the horses trotted along the trail we talked of some of the old "white Christmas days" back in Iowa. At long intervals we passed the sod house of some homesteader with its little patch of stubble field and corn. Without any indication of the line, the horses left the trail and followed a draw which led off to the westward. At the end of this draw, near the bank of the creek, stood the dug-out home of my old friend.

"Well, what do you think of it?" said friend Dave, as he swung down from the seat. His wife stood in the door, and as we entered, she said: "It is not as nice as the old Iowa home, but you are as welcome as you would be to a palace if we had it to offer, and the longer you stay the better it will suit us."

While the busy little woman is flying about singing "Beulah Land" and getting dinner I will tell my readers about this primitive Kansas home and its occupants.

In building his dug-out Dave had dug back into the bank of the draw about fifteen feet, and laid up walls of magnesia stone, which extended out from the bank about nine feet. The roof was made by putting on a strong ridge pole, on which lighter poles were laid for rafters, then a covering of light brush, and, lastly, a layer of sod. The inside walls were plastered with magnesia, and the ceiling covered with strong sheeting. The dug-out faced east with a door and two windows in the front, and half windows on the north and south. It was neat, clean, and comfortable, if not pretentious. Dave's father was among the well-to-do men of their native Iowa town. Dave and his wife grew up from childhood together, and were engaged to be married at the time Mr. H——— died. Upon settling up the estate it was found there would only be a few hundred dollars left after everything was sold and the debt paid. This brave little woman married her "Davie" and gave up the old home and friends in a cultured college town and went west to help her husband carve a home out of buffalo sod of western Kansas. Here I found them five years later, away out on this lonely prairie, and she doing her work as cheerfully and singing as blithely as she used to in the old home kitchen.

We read much of the hardihood and heroism with which our pioneers confronted the perils of the trackless wilderness; of the disregard of danger shown by the men who marked the pathway of civilization across plain and mountain to the distant Pacific; of the privations and hardships endured by the agriculturists and stockmen when wilderness and plain were being converted from the wilds. We are asked, and not vainly, to

thrill with admiration for the achievement of vigorous steel-thewed manhood and husky, adventurous youth, but of that greater, more wonderful heroism displayed by their mothers, wives and daughters, historians and novelists have been strangely silent. It is within the rightful province of men to do and dare, and a woman to suffer in silence. Why, then, should the one deserve much praise if not the other?

The women who molded bullets and loaded rifles for the defenders of the beleagured block-house or log cabin are deserving of a place in history, but no more so than their sisters of pioneer days on the plains. For these women were all heroic, resourceful in emergencies, patient and contented under conditions that only womankind could endure without a murmur. Living in shacks, sod houses, and dug-outs, isolated from the world and surrounded by dangers; often alone, or, worse, with the care and protection of a family on their shoulders; scantily provided with the necessities and comforts of life, and with none of life's pleasures, theirs was a heroism in comparison with which that of the husbands and brothers fades into insignificance.

These were the thoughts which were running through my mind when I was suddenly brought back to earth by the little lady saying: "It is not such a dinner as you are used to, Doctor, but I can't tell you how glad I am to have you with us to share it." As we pushed back from the dinner table, Dave said: "Now, Doctor, we have everything for our Christmas dinner but the meat, and you or I will have to provide that." I replied: "That's easy; we will have broiled prairie chicken and quail on toast, and that is something that would strain the pocketbooks of our city cousins."

We had a royal afternoon's sport with the quail along the creek bottom and the chickens in the corn, and brought home birds enough to make our part of the Christmas meal. What a voracious appetite we developed, and how nobly Mrs. H——— provided for its appeasement!

Pushing back from the table, I felt satisfied with the world, because I had finished a good, plain supper, flavored with the best of all seasoning, namely, plain sauce and an outdoor air appetite.

Our evening was passed quietly talking over the news of our old home. Retiring early, I was asleep almost as soon as I touched the soft feather bed. I awoke the next morning in time to hear the clock strike seven, and as I counted the strokes there came to me the recollection that this was Christmas, and that just a week before, to the minute, I had rolled out of bed weak and shivering and dreading my day's work. Only a week! Yet in that short time the whole world had changed. Turning over in bed, I looked out of the window just as the sun rose in the east and sent long, mellow shafts of gold aslant the autumn-tinted skies. I was greeted with a "Merry Christmas" from the bed on the other side of the curtain, and in a few minutes the tea kettle was singing merrily on the little cook stove.

Over our bacon and corn cakes Dave outlined the day's program. He said, "Doctor, you can go for a hunt and I will finish husking my corn this forenoon." I replied, "No; I will help you get the corn out, and after dinner we can drive over to your brother's and hunt on the way."

We had the corn in the crib just in time to wash for dinner. Oh, how good that Christmas dinner smelled as we stepped up to the open door of the little dug-out. I doubt very much if any of the rich city families enjoyed their Christmas dinner that day any more than we did. The game occupied the center of the table, flanked with a variety of other good dishes, and sauced with an appetite that could enjoy it.

After dinner we climbed into the big farm wagon and drove over to spend the afternoon with Dave's brother, Newton. There was an organ in the house, and the afternoon passed so quickly with music and visiting that it was night before we realized it. Newton lived in a four-roomed frame house, and before leaving we were invited into the dining room to partake

of a lunch of cold chicken, bread and butter, and pumpkin pies. About 9 o'clock we bade our friends good night and started for home. I love to live over in memory the contentment and happiness of that Christmas day, and the beauty and peacefulness of that moonlight night as we drove homeward across the prairie.

—Wallace's Farmer.

Old October Days in Iowa.

Hunting with Brother John.

As I sit by the fire this evening, listening to the song of the crickets, they call up sad yet pleasant memories of the past, and among the sweetest of these are those Indian summer days when I hunted with brother John on the prairies of Iowa.

After an unusually hard summer in the office I felt the need of rest and recreation, so dropped a line to my brother, who was practicing dentistry in the town of E———.

Game was more plentiful there then than now, and never again do I expect to enjoy such shooting as I had on that trip, as there are very few places where it could now be found. It had been many years since John and I had enjoyed a hunt together, and the evening of my arrival at his home was spent in pleasant reminiscences while I unpacked my trunk and put away my shooting outfit. Though we retired early, it seemed to me that my head had hardly touched the pillow before I heard a noise in the kitchen and the odors that came stealing in my room served notice on me that breakfast was nearly ready. As I rolled over in bed and looked away across the distant fields and prairies, I could imagine the big flocks

of full grown prairie chickens dodging around in the stubble in search of their morning feed.

The mere thought of these grand game birds had the effect of thoroughly electrifying me and bringing me out upon the floor in a twinkling. A warm breakfast disposed of and our guns and shells, together with a capacious basket (the contents of which I was made familiar with several hours later) were loaded into the buggy and we went rattling down the street with Reddy and Queen racing ahead now and then to sniff patronizingly at some cur dog which rushed out to salute us as we passed by. One, two, three, how fast the miles were traversed! I was just commencing to wonder when we were to begin operations, for we had gone by numerous fields seeming to me to be the choicest of shooting grounds, when suddenly John pulled up the horse at the end of a long piece of wheat stubble, probably twenty rods wide, and half a mile long. It was the only piece of stubble within a mile, and an ideal feeding ground for the wary birds we were seeking. We were not surprised when Reddy, who had been making game for sometime, drew down to a fine point in the rag weed at the edge of the field, and was beautifully backed by Queen. What a pretty picture they presented, and how I regretted that the kodak had been left at home! As we neared the dogs, they crept forward a few steps and John said: "You take the first bird that gets up." Scarcely had the words left his lips when a lusty bird darted like lightning from the stubble and took a straight-away course. The little gun came up promptly and, at its sharp crack, my victim pitched from sight. A shell was thrust in the smoking chamber and we prepared for more birds. Reddy still stood on his original point and we knew we might expect more birds to burst out at any time. A step forward on my part, and a cock bird burst forth on John's side and went rushing away with a great fuss and whirring of wings. It assayed towering above John's head and escaping behind his back, but at the report of the ten-gauge I saw an inanimate form falling earthward through the cloud of smoke overhead.

At the last report there was a great commotion and quite a bunch of birds shot out like a bolt of lightning. I heard John's second barrel, and three or four more birds emerged upon my side, a snap shot at the two foremost was fired, but resulted in a blank. Through the vaporous fumes of the powder smoke I saw another of the sly rascals making for cover at a great pace and my finger instantly pressed the trigger; but the charge of No. 7's only hastened its flight to a place of safety. From the scene of our first onslaught we drove northward toward the river and, as we neared the timber, John said: "Now, Doc, get ready for a crack at quail, for there is always a flock or two in the timber above the bridge." After crossing the bridge, we tied our horse to a tree and struck out with both dogs ranging in fine shape and covering the ground thoroughly. Twenty yards from the entrance to the timber, which we found to our delight not to be so thick but what good shooting was comparatively easy, Reddy, who was working systematically ahead of us, came to a dead stop and no amount of persuasion would induce him to advance. The ground was covered with a sparse growth of short, dead grass which grew up between the stones with which the ground was strewn. For several yards around us there was nothing to prevent our seeing the bird on the ground, or at least so I thought, and with a warning word to Reddy for his carelessness in pointing a bird in such a positive manner, I took a step forward. As I did so, out from almost under my nose started the bird, which shot aloft like a rocket. So surprised was I that I lost considerable time in swinging my gun to position and in the meantime John killed the bird from behind my back. Then followed a vastly pleasing and exciting experience—that of putting up the remaining birds from the timber. A half an hour later we had succeeded in flushing a greater part of the bevy, but our bag was not as good as it should have been considering the many fine shots we both had. I never was a good shot at quail, and on this occasion our game pockets were not pulling as heavy on our shoulders as would have been the case had I done my part. John pro-

posed that we take another tramp through a low piece of cover down near the stream. Nothing loth I agreed, and we proceeded through the patch. When about half way through, a circumstance occurred, the recollection of which time, in its advance, will not be able to wholly obliterate from my memory.

John pointed up stream saying: "Here comes a bunch of mallards. They are likely to drop in at this bend, and if they do, we will clean up the bunch." As they neared our hiding place, they set their wings and dropped into the river about thirty rods above us. We kept quiet for a few minutes to give them time to get settled, then we carefully raised our heads above the willows, expecting to give that bunch of wary old mallards the surprise of their life. But, alas!

> "The best laid plans of mice and men
> Gang aft agley."

Not a duck was in sight on the river and a half hour's careful search up and down the stream failed to locate them.

One more run through a piece of brush that intervened between us and our waiting rig added three cotton-tails to our bag. We at last arrived at the wagon and emptied our pockets into it. The half hour following we devoted to that most pleasurable of occupations overhauling the lunch basket. Then we stretched ourselves on the big fur robe and took things easy until the slanting rays of the sun warned us that it was time to be moving. John proposed that we drive out of our way several miles to a favorite chicken ground and take in the evening shooting. Not willing to appear at all fagged, I yielded a ready assent and, driving our horse down to the river to water, we climbed in and sped smoothly away toward the north.

Nestling at our feet lay the trophies of our shoot, resplendent in their winter garb of fur and feather. Game little fellows, 'twas their misfortune to be the victims, our fortune to be the victors, but none can say that we gave them no chance for their lives.

The sun was low in the west as we alighted within five minutes' walk of one of those long, narrow sloughs with which northwest Iowa was so bountifully supplied in those days, and which formed the nesting and roosting grounds for hundreds of thousands of Iowa's grand game birds. This slough was bounded on two sides by wheat stubble, and being a long distance from any farm house, was an ideal shooting ground in those days. At this time of the day we knew we would find our game along the border of the field working their way back to their roosting ground after their evening feed. As we reached the edge of the slough, Queen commenced to draw to a point and an old, experienced cock got up a long distance ahead and darted away unharmed. However, all were not so watchful and the pair which popped up close by, a moment later, and essayed to escape by an exhibition of the same kind, were not so lucky. We were now at the beginning of the shooting ground and some distance apart, leaving the intervening stubble between us for the dogs to work. To describe the feeding ground we found there, and the myriad of birds busily engaged in adding more fat to their already plump bodies would require a pen far more nimble than mine. What sport could be more exhilarating than to stand in the midst of such shooting as this, half the time in doubt which way to swing the tapering barrels to ge the best shot?

My pen is not gifted enough to describe the next hour's shooting, but my readers who have been there know all about it. Suffice to say that such shooting cannot be realized anywhere on chickens at the present time.

The shadows of the wheat stacks were long when the dogs made their first stand, and almost before we realized it our shooting for the day was done; but it had been a glorious day and we were happy and satisfied. Hitching up, we took our course across the prairie toward a dark streak in the west which we knew was the "river timber." As we drove homeward we read the signs which were all about us. The afterglow of the hazy Indian summer sunset, the shaggy tops of

the golden rod, the little white bunches of gum on the resin weed, the great flocks of ducks and geese headed southward, all told the tale of summer's close. Many years have passed since I spent those happy days with brother John, but never does October roll around without recalling some of the hunting or fishing incidents of that joyous two weeks' vacation.

—Outers' Book.

In Northern Woods.

It was one of the last days in the beautiful month of October. The oaks and maples were blazing forth in their autumnal colors, while the elms along the creek bank were sadly giving up their yellow leaves to Mother Earth. Sharp frosts had killed the tender vegetation and browned the upland fields; but here and there in sheltered spots, along the sunny banks of the stream, the grass was still green, as if trying to persuade the passer-by that another summer had come. But alas! the falling leaves, the tints of the foliage, the fading golden-rod and blighted vegetation told too well the tale that summer's days were o'er and that the twilight season of the year had come.

I had started out for a tramp down-creek with my 20-bore on my shoulder and my fishing tackle in my pocket. Striking across the low meadowland that separated my home from the timber, I came out on the banks of the creek and followed its winding course to the southward. It was a quiet, lazy day—one of those dreamy fall days when all the world seems to be at a stand-still, halting between summer and winter. The spirit of the day seemed to catch me and I strolled listlessly along, following every winding turn of the stream, lost in dreamy meditation.

I had been spending a month's vacation at my old home and every afternoon found me fishing the waters of Lime Creek or hunting pheasants and squirrels in the woods along its shores. I had spent so much time at these sports that I knew the haunt of every wary denizen of wood and water for miles around. Winter would soon be with us again and spread her mantle of white over these brown fields and meadows. Tomorrow I must leave for my Nebraska home and another year must roll around with its humdrum life and hard work before I could again visit this charming spot and enjoy the health-giving pleasures of gun and rod.

My reveries were suddenly disturbed by the splashing of a flock of mallards, as they darted out from under a bush of willows, thirty yards to my left. Throwing the little gun quickly to my shoulder, I sent a charge of shot after the laggard of the flock, but the distance was too great for my light load of fine shot. A few feathers floated lazily down on the autumn leaves as the flock disappeared around the bend out of sight. I had a half-mile of good duck water to traverse yet before reaching my destination and I resolved to keep a closer eye on the water. I kept close in among the willows and scanned every open course of water carefully, but reached my fishing ground at the old dam without seeing another duck. Standing my gun against the abutment where it would be in easy reach, I got out my steel rod and box of tackle and prepared to cast for pickerel. Where the water rushed through the waste gate, in the middle of the dam, it had washed a deep hole in the middle of the stream which was a favorite resort of the big ones these late autumn days. There was one old-timer in the pool that I had hooked twice before and I was anxious to have one more whirl at him before leaving. This was the main object of my afternoon tramp. Examining the line and leader carefully, I tied on a Skinner spoon, hooked on a small frog and cast across the pool. I trolled the tempting bait slowly across the pool and along the whole length of the apron of the dam, but got no rise. Twice, three times, without results. The fourth time I noticed a little swirl behind the spoon just as it left the water. I knew what that meant and prepared for trouble on the next pass. Another cast over near the drooping willows, and as the spoon reached the deepest part of the stream there was a roll of water, a tug of the line, and the battle was on. I struck quick and the old fellow went straight for the apron of the dam. I knew if he ever reached it, it meant disaster to the line and loss of the fish. I snubbed him all the light line would bear. Just at the edge of the apron he leapt clear out of the water and started back toward me. I held him taut on the line, and when about thirty feet from me he made another turn for the willows and

took 150 feet of line before I could check him. It was his last long run, and as I reeled him in I felt sure of him, and then is when I came near losing him. I was standing on the apron near the gate and when he got within a few feet of me he made a dash under the apron. I succeeded in checking him, and as he came slowly in my eyes eagerly followed the line down into the depths and soon I saw his glistening sides in the light. Foot by foot I took up the line, only to lose it again in another spurt; but it was a short one and soon I had him at my feet, panting—but game to the last. What a beauty he was! and what a battle he put up! The memory of that fight and conquest is worth more to me than the cost of the whole trip.

The sun was well down the western horizon as I reeled up my line, put away the tackle and climbed the hill, with my prize, through the woods. When I reached the top of the hill I stood under the big trees and looked back across the valley toward Pilot Mound. The hillsides of northern Iowa and southern Minnesota are superlatively beautiful in October, when the forest puts on its autumnal garb. The beauties of that October evening will ever remain one of memory's most beautiful pictures. The bright sun in the western horizon shedding its placid light on the autumn tinted foliage; the creek winding away to the south like a silver ribbon; the clear, pure air; the whispering breeze; the falling leaves; the chattering squirrel as he gathered his winter store, and the drumming of a pheasant across the ravine—all these sights and sounds belong to the woods, and the man who does not love them is to be pitied. Some one has called the autumn days the saddest of the year; but in my judgment he is wrong and I believe all lovers of rod and gun will agree with me.

—Sports Afield.

Autumn Days in the Rockies.

For weeks we had felt the symptoms of mountain fever and had begun to wonder what autumn days were like in the Rockies and if the trout were biting in the mountain streams. We talked and planned so much that our thoughts were more with the great range of mountains to the westward than with the ordinary things about us.

At last all arrangements were complete and a bright September morning found our party aboard the west-bound train on the Burlington & Missouri railroad, hurrying across southern Nebraska at a fifty-mile gait. The green fields of alfalfa, golden harvest, ripening corn and great herds of cattle along the Republican Valley slipped by us as we sped on toward Denver.

Just after leaving Fort Morgan the long train swung gracefully around a curve, bringing into view that mighty procession of giant peaks which forms the front range of the Rocky Mountains—over a hundred miles away. When first seen the mountain range could hardly be distinguished from the clouds that hung around the high peaks.

> "So softly blending that the cheated eye
> Forgets, or which is earth or which is heaven."

As the train rolled swiftly on, our enraptured eyes searched the panorama for land marks. At 4:45 p. m. the train pulled into the Union Station at Denver and we had just fifteen minutes to get our tickets and transfer to the "Park Train" of the Colorado Southern. At 5 p. m. the little narrow gauge train moved out of the railroad yards and we were soon speeding away up the Platte, amid beautiful farms, orchards and gardens. Twenty miles from Denver we left the pretty valley behind and entered the rocky portals of South Platte Canyon and at last we were among the scenes that had haunted our dreams for weeks. After entering the canyon the two little steel ribbons of the Colorado Southern follow every winding turn of the

river, crossing first to one side and then to the other and at times resting on a bed carved out of the solid walls of granite. The entire route is a continuation of graceful curves; each one opening up new scenes of wonder and grandeur to eager eyes. The mountains are always beautiful in the early autumn,

> "When the fern is red on the mountain,
> And the cloud is low in the sky,"

then they are at their best. The rough, rugged walls of the canyon on one side of the train, clothed in their varying tints of green, orange and brown, and the foaming waters of the river on the other, brought exclamations of surprise from the lips of many a nature-loving tourist as the train proceeded up the canyon.

One moment the perpendicular walls encroached upon the river until it seems as though the train would certainly dash against the face of the cliff; but suddenly it makes a sharp turn over a bridge into a pretty little park and stops at Strontia Springs. This is the first resort in the canyon and a fitting introduction to the beauty that lies beyond. The neat station and pretty cottages in the midst of a green park, with the sloping, wooded hills in autumn tints, formed a very attractive picture.

A run of three miles farther and our train stopped at South Platte station, thirty miles from Denver. This is where the north and south forks of the Platte River form a junction and is an ideal angler's resort, as either branch can be fished from here. From the South Platte station the railroad follows the north part of the Platte and the higher the panting iron horse climbs the grander the scenery becomes.

A short distance from the South Platte a fellow tourist pointed out to us the "Cathedral Spires," a peculiar rocky formation, very much resembling the spires of an ancient cathedral. For several miles they were seen and lost to view, as the train followed the windings of the river. Dome Rock next came into view. It is an odd dome-shaped rock protruding

"The view that lay spread out around and below well repaid the hours of toil."

from the earth at the base of the mountains and has the appearance of a buried mosque. It was dark when the train made the next stop at Ferndale, one of the most unique resorts in the canyon. As a rule, mountain resorts are located in the valleys or parks, but Ferndale is situated in a narrow gorge where there is barely room for the river and railroad. When the train stopped, a number of people got off and I wondered where they were going. Not a cottage or tent could be seen and the thickly wooded walls of the canyon rose abruptly from the track on either side. Glancing back as the train moved away from the station I noticed the twinkling of lights among the thick growth of blue spruce away up on the mountain side and the mystery was explained. There were the homes of the summer cottagers, one above another in mid-air, like a colony of wasps.

At 8 o'clock p. m. the brakeman called "Cliff," and our delightful day's ride of 450 miles was ended. In this run of one day we were carried from the beautiful and fertile south central Nebraska through the great grazing section of western Nebraska, and landed amidst the grandest mountain scenery of the continent.

You will note a peculiar characteristic with every mountain stream that flows through a narrow valley—it never follows the middle, but invariably hugs the higher and steeper bank for a distance until the cliffs rise on the opposite side, when it crosses over to keep company with its more imposing friend.

The cliff cottages are built at a bend of the river where the stream winds around the base of Cliff Rock, leaving a piece of bench land on the mountain side just large enough for the half dozen tiny cottages. As we stepped off the train the moon was just appearing over the cliff across the river and the scene was an enchanting one. Clouds were hovering above the mountains wantonly descending, then lifting and floating across the canyon and through the tree tops. The river, fresh from the eternal snows, went tumbling and foaming over the rocks, the pines whispered in the breeze and lent their soothing fragrance to the air.

"Several casts in the still waters failed to bring a rise." [87]

Our first two days were passed very quietly fishing the nearby trout pools, strolling over the mountains, gathering flowers, berries and specimens and getting acquainted with our fellow-tourists. The third morning, while eating breakfast, we questioned as to what we would do for the day—go up the river for trout, go over the mountains, visit the mines, or go fishing. We could not decide on a route that suited all, so divided up in three parties for the day. Several of the gentlemen took a lunch and walked up to the "Copper King" mines. The ladies went for a stroll over the mountain west of the cottages. I put in the forenoon photographing near home and after dinner took my rod and reel and went up the river after trout. I followed the railroad track as far as the curve, then scrambling down over the rocks, struck the river at the head of the rapids and a more promising piece of

water I never cast a fly over. Putting my rod together, I tied a couple of flies and began casting. I tried the quiet riffles near the banks and under the shelving rocks where it seemed there must be trout, but not a rise could I get. I walked slowly up stream, climbing over rocks and around waterfalls, casting here and there in likely places in hopes of securing a "big 'un."

Many large trout could be seen in the deep, clear pools, but they would not take the fly. Time and time again I changed flies, but to no purpose. Near the falls I met an angler carrying an unjointed rod in his hand. "There are plenty of trout down there," he said, pointing toward the pool above the falls, "but they are not biting today." This was discouraging, but I went down determined to find out for myself. Several casts in the still waters failed to bring a rise, so I clambered out on some rocks and casting by a half sunken log got a rise and hooked the fish, but the current was so swift that in trying to snub him away from some brush he tore loose and was gone.

With him went the remnant of my rapidly fading dreams of fried trout for breakfast, so I reeled up and started for home. My unrewarded efforts of the afternoon were not such as would afford the average angler much pleasure. However, my disappointment was not as great as might be supposed. In reality the fishing was but one of the many pleasures of that afternoon's experience. To a lover of nature the keen enjoyment of following up a mountain stream on such an ideal day amid such grand scenery is itself sufficient compensation for all the labor. As I neared home in the early twilight, I saw a Denver angler dressing a catch of twenty trout on a big flat rock beside the stream. Upon inquiring where he caught them he replied, "Between here and Crossen's."

This was the very water I had fished over so carefully just about two hours ahead of him, which proved to me that there were plenty of trout in the stream that could be caught at the proper time, with the proper bait, by one who knew how.

Wednesday afternoon another crank and myself went on a photographing tramp up the canyon. We followed the railroad as far as the falls, then taking a dim trail, started up the steep side of the canyon towards one of the highest peaks, the roar of the little cataract behind us growing fainter and fainter as we toiled up the rough mountain side. The trail led through beautiful groves of pine and spruce among raspberry bushes loaded with luscious fruit. We picked and ate until our stomachs said "enough." The raspberries were not the only attraction, for

"Beside the path hung trailing vine
Pretty bluebells and columbine."

We began to wonder where the trail was taking us when an abrupt turn brought us out on a table-like spur near the top. The view that lay spread around and below us well repaid the hours of toil up the steep mountain side. Around us on all sides towered the stupendous rocky masses that form the western slope of the Rockies. From the cliff side where we stood stretched away to the southward the rugged green fringed walls of the canyon, the tumbling river appearing and disappearing among the green like a silver ribbon. Behind us lay the snow-capped peaks hidden in a bank of dark clouds. The world goes by comparisons and we did not realize how high we were until we caught sight of two white specks on the dark rocks above the falls. Setting up the camera I put on the telephoto and focused on the falls, and the ground glass showed two anglers dressed in white, about one-eighth of an inch tall. The day was ideal for camera work and we made the most of the opportunity until the declining sun and chill air warned us that it was time to move toward home. It was pretty dark in the thick timber, but we made the descent without accident and reached the cottages in time for a late supper.

—Outers' Book.

Christmas in the Old Log Cabin.

It is a cold, dreary winter evening. Storm clouds are scudding down from the northwest, shutting out the last rays of declining light, as the white-robed winter-night closes in on the city.

"The evening sky is dim with snow;
The flakes falter, and fall slow;
Aslant the hill-top wrapt and pale,
Silently drops the silver veil.
And all the valley is shut in
By flickering curtains gray and thin."

The walks are full of pedestrians hurrying homeward with joyous faces and arms full of bundles, all intent on making some loved one happy on the glad Christmas morning so near at hand.

Darkness settles down on the street. The bright sparkle of electric lights here and there only serves to increase the gray gloom beyond their circle of radiance. Turning away from the window I poke the center-log near the fire's heart and allow imagination to carry me back to another Christmas time in bygone days. Before me I see a winding road through the forest; beside the road, hidden among the trees, stands a comfortable log cabin. Sitting around the big, open fireplace is gathered a happy family circle telling stories, eating hickory nuts, and popping corn. Father had been to town that day to do the Christmas trading and is tired and sleepy after his long ride in the cold winter wind. Leaning back his head in the old hickory splint chair, his eyes closed and a smile crept over his face as he dropped to sleep.

The fire flamed and danced up the chimney. The old cat arose from its corner by the fire, and, walking over to father, rubbed against his leg and purred. Mother, who was busily knitting, looked up to father and said: "Father, did you get all the things we had on the order slip?" Father, starting up from his doze, replied: "Yes, mother, and some things that were

not on the slip." "Well, father, I am glad you did, for it will keep me busy to get ready for our Christmas company."

"Mother," said our father, "it was snowing when I came in, and I am afraid, from the looks, that we will have a stormy Christmas day; but I hope it will not be bad enough to keep our company from coming, for I know if there is anything you enjoy more than cooking a good dinner it is to see your friends and dear ones enjoy the eating of it."

A shadow passed over mother's face at the thought of such a disappointment. For this day we had pared, peeled, chopped and ground, and picked feathers, and we had lived in happy anticipation of this annual gathering for a whole year. Railroads were few and far between and market towns a long distance from our pioneer home in those days. Settlers lived long distances apart and could not avail themselves of "holiday rates" and whirl away down the valley fifty or a hundred miles to visit friends or relatives. But once a year we would all get together at some home, and what a grand meeting it was for everyone who was able to go!

Our last Christmas morning in the old log cabin dawned clear and cold. Just enough snow had fallen during the night to make the sleighing fine. We little folk could hardly wait for the first ox team to appear, and it was half way to noon before the first one came in sight around the turn in the road. By half past eleven o'clock the last tired team was in the barn and the men were chatting before the fireplace in the spare room. The women visitors were helping with the dinner. The clatter of tongues and dishes were harmonious, and many a good story and bit of gentle gossip was followed by merry peals of laughter.

In those days there was no social distinction in the little pioneer settlement. Everyone co-operated with his neighbor in everything undertaken in the settlement. No building was ever erected but by a joint effort of the neighborhood, nor did a family fail to enter into the plans and hopes of all the

branches that went out from it. As for the women indoors, were they not also as one?

At half past twelve dinner was called, and what a rich blending of odors arose from that table as we seated ourselves around it! Plateful after plateful disappeared; each new dish received a heartfelt compliment from some of the pleased guests. When at last the feast was ended the men folk went out to inspect the stock, compare crop results, and talk over their plans for the next year's work. The women took hold and helped to "clear the table." Amid the rattle of dishes and merry laughter the task was a light one and the dishes were soon put away in the old home-made cupboard.

As soon as we could slip away from the dinner table, we youngsters took the home-made hickory sleds and went to the big hill behind the barn. There is no need to tell our younger readers what we did there, but the afternoon passed so quickly that darkness was upon us before we knew it. As we trudged up the hill for the last time, with ears, feet, and fingers tingling, we were a happy group. Happier far than many city-bred children who had received rich gifts. Health, contentment and innocent amusement are the great necessities of pleasure; and who were blessed with more of these than we on that bright Christmas day?

Then came night with its silvered mid-winter mantle, always the sweetest part of the day in a country home. Everyone gathered in the big room, old and young together. Dry logs were piled high on the andirons, the flames and sparks danced up the chimney, lighting up the circle of happy faces within its warm glow. While we were popping corn our elders were relating the family history of the year and exchanging news items that had been gathered since the last reunion. Newspapers and other periodicals were not as cheap and plentiful then as now, and these gatherings were a sort of neighborhood newspaper. They were freer from crime and scandal and therefore more wholesome literary food for the young mind than much of the cheap trash that now falls into their hands.

At 8 o'clock candles were lighted and we ate our lunch. These candles were not the little fancy wax-tapers of today, but the old home-made "six-to-a-pound" tallow candles. There was plenty left from dinner for lunch, and enough for several more such meals.

After lunch the ox teams and long sleds were brought around to the door, and the families bundled in and wrapped up for the cold ride home. Each sled carried with it a basket full of their Christmas dinner. By 9 o'clock we children were in bed, and in our dreams were living over again that happy Christmas day already numbered among the bygones.

After all, the true home is a country home; and happy is the man or woman whose youthful days were passed in the country. Years of city life can never efface the picture, and the luxurious city home can never replace it.

Many Christmas days have come and gone since that last one on the old farm, but it stands out brighter on memory's page than any of them, and

"It comes to me often in silence,
When the firelight sputters low;
When the black, uncertain shadows
Seem ghosts of long ago."

—Wallace's Farmer.

A New Year's Deer Hunt.

Winter Morning Scene.

A few years make great changes in any section of a country, but especially so when it happens to be located in a progressive western state, like Iowa. This idea was never more forcibly presented to me than on a recent flying trip through the northern part of the above named state. A rich agricultural country, one of the finest under the sun—farms, orchards, and homes where thirty years ago I hunted and trapped. As our train whirled us through this lovely pastoral region on an ideal September day, I closed my eyes in dreamy meditation and lived it all over again.

It was New Year's eve—a cold, still night—and as the sun disappeared behind the tree tops we hurried our preparations for the night. A big pile of dry limbs were cut and carried in, fresh snow piled up around the bottom of the tent, the flap buttoned tight, and we were ready for the night. Lighting the grease dip, we gathered around the red-hot stove, and told stories until time to retire. While preparing for bed, a pack of wolves across the creek treated us to a New Year's eve concert, but it did not keep us awake, and we were soon in dreamland, living over again the boyhood New Year's days in the old home. It was daylight when I awoke, and unfastening the tent, I looked out. A light snow had fallen during the night and it was clear, cold, and calm; an ideal New Year's morn. I had planned a deer hunt for the day, and as soon as breakfast

was over, I shouldered my gun and struck out toward Pilot Mound. The big arms of the trees were loaded with light snow. The small branches and vines that encircled them were drooping chains of feathery white, and the few scattering berries on the thorn-apple shone brighter than ever from their garlands of snow. The woods were wild then, and the new snow was written everywhere with strange characters. Down by the creek was the curious wallowing trail of the otter, but I knew too much to follow it. Here the mink had taken an airing and a hunt during the night, but I was too well posted on mink to lose any time with their tracks. Everywhere were the tracks of the big bushy-footed hare, now in his white robe of winter; and smaller tracks like those of the cotton-tail, but leading to the trunk of some big tree where they came to a sudden end. Here were tracks of the little wood-mouse looking like a small chain had been dropped in the snow, and yet, with all these tracks there was no sign of life. Silence, vast and deep, lay upon the woods. There was not even the bark of a squirrel or chirp of a bird, nor even a sighing of a breeze through the tree-tops, and save the occasional flakes of snow sifting from the branches, not a motion far or near. Trails of deer were everywhere, and it seemed as if there were hundreds of them within a short radius. I was worried to know what I should do with all my game, but this was my first deer hunt and I had lots to learn. Here three deer had jumped a log whisking the snow from the top as they descended on the other side, and my hand trembled as I grasped the gun with a firmer grip, expecting to see them just beyond the log.

Onward I glided with moccasined foot, so gently that even the air was unruffled by my movements, watching the depths of the woods far ahead so intently, with eyes naturally keen and long trained upon other game, that it would be impossible for anything so large as a deer to stir without my catching the motion. How many have felt that sweet delusion! There is no certainty on earth that wears its charm, no disenchantment so astounding when the real truth breaks upon you. Soon I found

where the deer had plowed up the snow and thrown it out in sparkling heaps in front of their hoof tracks. And the next set of tracks were sixteen feet beyond, while all the snow and some of the berries were knocked from a low thorn-apple over which they had bounded. A leaden chill displaced the warm glow within, and, as I wondered how they could have known I was about, I was troubled less about the disposal of my game. It was no trouble to find fresh tracks and I was soon on the trail of a buck and a doe that were straggling along nipping buds and sprouts by the way. Here they separated and there they came together again. Here they had stopped, and there gone on, but nowhere could my sharpest search discover anything like fur, though for over a mile I followed them in constant expectation of at least a sight of them, if not a shot, for the feeling grew upon me that even a sight of them would be welcome. At last they crossed a slough and entered a dense thicket of trees and underbrush. It was not probable that they would leave it at this time of day unless frightened, and now the problem was to get even a sight of them in the dense brush. Creeping carefully through the hazel brush on the border of the thicket, I stood behind a tree and peered into the brush beyond, but saw nothing. Stepping on a fallen tree trunk, I walked toward the brush end. As I neared the top, there came a muffled crack of brush, faint, but unmistakable, and as I ran along the log to get a better place to see from, there was a thump on the ground and again the crack of brush louder than before. Glossy as the coat of a seal rising from the water, there arose over a log beyond a high curve of dark bluish gray. Over the log it went, with the ease of dancing light, a whirl of white flirting upward as it descended on the other side, while almost beside it rose into the light of the rising sun another curve of glistening gray. Over it went with the same flash of white as it descended, and before it disappeared from sight, the first deer rose again, the light glistening on his polished horns. Deer running through down timber and low brush make the most deceptive of all shots. They run with such ease

and grace, and seem so near, that one little suspects how the logs and trees beyond hunger for lead.

I was shooting a double-barrel muzzle-loading gun, and as the big buck rose over the second log I held low with great care with the sight glimmering on the white below the rising tail and pulled the trigger. I saw the snow fly from the top of the log as the whirl went over it in an easy curve. But how those nine buckshot missed that large body and got through that group of logs was a surprise to me. But they did, and my deer sped on unhurt. I watched them as they bounded across the open prairie and knew that it would be useless to follow them any further that day.

There was an Indian camp on Lime Creek above our own and I decided to take that in on my way back. I gave up the idea of venison and, hunting carefully on my way back to the creek for smaller game, I picked up a few rabbits and pheasants, reaching the Indian camp just as they were at dinner. I was hungry, but not hungry enough to join them in their New Year's dinner. A big kettle of stew hung over the fire, the meat part of which looked suspiciously like muskrat to me, and the balance—well, I would not even guess at that. Over another fire hung a kettle full of some kind of grease, and a squaw was dropping pieces of dough into this to cook them.

It was 3 o'clock when I reached camp, and dinner was ready. Ours was a boiled dinner, too, consisting of stewed venison, potatoes, cold beans and hot biscuit. There was no second or third course, but the meal was sauced with a healthy outdoor appetite that made it a feast.

Within an hour after our dinner dishes were put away the dark, stormy night closed in. The wind howled through the trees and the snow piled against the tent, but our double tent and red-hot stove defied the wintry blasts. Jokes, stories, anecdotes of bad misses and mishaps whiled away the hours until bed-time.

—Outers' Book.

Springtime in the Country.

"Oh! breath of the springtime, your soft air I bless;
You wake the sweet flowers with your tender caress.
And May, with your sunshine, most gladly I greet,
You tempt into blossom my brier bush sweet."

Spring in the country! What a glorious season it is! Not to feel the sweet influences of this creative season in the country is to be shut within the walls of a living prison.

The farm is so near to nature, so near to God, especially on a balmy spring morning, when all is so still, sweet and peaceful, that we who were reared in a country home, and blest by it, can never forget those happy spring days on the old farm.

He who cannot go out to his work whistling on a bright, dewy April morning is deaf to the richest of God's seasons and blessings. Why, everything feels it. The young calves and colts in the barnyard, the lambs in the pasture, the birds in the hedgerow and the swallows circling and sailing overhead. Even the earth beneath your feet, for—

"Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers;
And grasping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers."

From the time when the first little blade thrusts its green head above the sod, until June comes with her garlands of roses, spring is the regal queen that rules the land.

To be sure, the flowers of spring are not so gay colored and gorgeous as those of summer and early autumn. They are more subdued in color and delicate of odor, but there is a freshness about them that wins the heart of every beholder.

Writing of spring flowers, brings back the days when I used to follow the drag across the old "wood lot." This field was inclosed with a rail fence. Here, in the protected corners of the old zigzag fence, I used to find the first blossoms of spring and the first wild strawberries of early summer. How eagerly I used to watch for the coming of the modest little

violet hidden away in the corners of the fence under the bottom rail. I do not mean the tri-colored pansy, but the little old-fashioned "retiring violet," that has been immortalized in prose and poetry for the last 3,000 years.

Pleasant it would be to linger with those old spring flowers and bring them up one by one, the daisies, cowslips, daffodils, hawthorns, wild honeysuckles and many others. They were all dear to me and many a scolding have I got for not driving the team closer to the fence when making the turns at the end of the field.

The wild flowers are not the only ones to lend their fragrance and grace to the beautifying of the landscape. There is a wealth of beauty in the orchard blossoms of early spring. Especially is this true of the apple and peach, with their sweet fragrance, symmetrical petals and delicately blended colorings. Not only are the orchard blossoms a thing of beauty in the spring, but they give joyful promise of a bountiful harvest of luscious fruit.

It is said that "the lightest thoughts have their roots in gravity," and so it is with this flowery, vernal season. Back of all lies the consciousness that the world is young again; that seeding time has come round and he who would reap must sow.

Nature has begun again, and in every flower, bud and blade of grass the husbandman sees her promised rewards for his labors. No season of the year, and no occupation, brings man in such close touch with nature as when he co-operates with her in the planting season of the year.

However apathetic the rest of the world may be at this season, people who live in the country understand and enjoy it. The farmer, as he stands in his orchard and looks down the long rows of trees dressed in their spring robes of white, pink and green, looks ahead with keenest pleasure to those days when autumn

"With magic wand shall turn to gold
The grain fields broad and fair,
And within her arms shall hold
A wealth of apple, peach and pear."

The farmers' wives and daughters hang over the sweet little firstling-flowers each return of spring with the same keen delight as though the world were new born and this their first visit.

Thus it is: this wonderful resurrection of life and beauty out of the death-sleep of winter has a meaning in it for the country dweller that cannot be comprehended by those who live within the walled and paved streets of the city.

Reader, did you ever stop to think why our cities spend so much money on their park systems? It is to bring the country, nature—God's beautiful outdoors—within reach of the poor, pent-up city residents. How eagerly the people flock to them as soon as the warm rays of the spring sun has loosed the little lakes from the icy bonds of winter and turned the sod green! How quickly the care-worn expression of city strife is replaced with sunny smiles when once among the birds, trees and flowers!

Happy indeed should they be who live constantly where they can feel and enter into the spirit of God's works at this awakening season.

"Gentle spring, in sunshine clad,
Well dost thou thy power display;
For winter maketh the gay heart sad,
But thou—thou makest the sad heart gay!"

—Twentieth Century Farmer.

"Entering the Narrows."

Two Days on the St. Vrain.

If the reader will take a map of Colorado and locate the little town of Lyons (forty-eight miles north of Denver, the terminus of the Estes Park, branch of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad) he will find a crooked little mountain stream called the St. Vrain. Taking its rise away up among the snow-capped peaks on the "Continental Divide," it winds and twists its way down the eastern slopes merging into civilization at Lyons. After leaving its rock-bound bed it glides out into a broad, fertile valley. On either bank are rich, alluvial lands, the course of the river through which can be

traced by the fringe of timber along each bank, until lost to sight in the distance. These lands are all under irrigation and everything indicates comfort and prosperity.

What a beautiful pastoral picture was presented to us as we sped up the valley one September afternoon! People were busy harvesting and the orchards hung full of rich, ripe fruit.

Friday morning, immediately after breakfast, we took our rods and camera and started down stream. The day was bright and warm, and the country was beautiful under the mellowing influence of early autumn.

"Bright autumn comes, a regal queen,
In royal robes arrayed;
Her crown the rainbow's changing sheen,
That spans the clear cascade."

Down the valley from Lyons, the river has worn a wide channel during the lapse of ages, through the center of which it meanders, sparkling and bright, over a gravelly bottom, rippling occasionally around a boulder with scarcely an audible murmur as if unwilling to disturb the repose of nature. At places the channel narrows, the river tumbles over the rocky bottom for a few rods under the over-hanging willows, then glides out into a broad quiet pool. These are the places where the big trout hide.

It was mid-afternoon when we returned to the hotel, tired and hungry, but feeling well repaid for our long tramp.

The next day we hired a team and guide for a drive up the St. Vrain, and what a change from a day before! A half-mile from town, we crossed a long bridge and entered the narrow rock-walled canon of the South Fork. The broad stream in its course, narrows into crevices between the hills, in roaring, foaming rapids, the distant music of which, with the soft wind in the pines, spruces and cedars, makes the most soothing of nature's lullabies.

In places the stream broadens into placid, smiling pools, always deep, cold and clear, and always locked in the embrace

of those eternal hills. For centuries, these mountains have stood mantled in sombre green or wrapped in snow—watching with unchanging mien the tiny humans crawling up and down their sides or along the river's edge. Whether obscured by clouds of mist and rain, or bathed in the warm sunlight of noonday, they are always the same, grand and beautiful.

As we proceed, the canon grows narrower and narrower. The mountains tower higher on either hand until all we can see are the rugged walls of granite and a clear strip of blue sky over our heads. Now and then a mass of snowy cloud drifts rapidly over, looking like a huge pile of foam floating in a sea of blue.

Near the "Little Narrows" the canyon walls encroach upon the stream until there is no room for the road. Timbers have been set into the solid rock and a plank road built over the water. A short distance above the "Narrows" the road crosses to the south side, follows the old bed of the stream for a short distance, then crosses back to the north side, makes a sharp turn and enters the "Big Narrows." It seems an impossibility to get through these with our carriage, but the road winds back and forth across the river among the rocks; a half hour's hard climbing brings us out in a pretty basin near the falls. We all get out, rest up, and hunt specimens for an hour or two, before starting on the return drive.

The impressive scenery, however, is not the only attraction along this stream, for it is the home of the rainbow and mountain trout. About three miles from town we overtake two anglers and, in answer to our inquiry "What luck?" they raise the cover of their baskets and show us full creels of beauties; one of the largest being sixteen and a half inches in length.

Just as we reach the open valley, the sun sinks slowly behind the mountain tops and shadows creep down the slope behind us. Gradually the shadows grow longer and longer, chasing before them the golden light of day, until all that indicates the presence of the sun before the horizon is a bright line

of light; one moment more, this, too, is gone and darkness settles down upon everything around us.

We leave Lyons in the early morning, but the scenes of yesterday go with us, for when once those mountains, valleys and streams have entered a man's consciousness they never leave it.

Ah! the dear day-dream of that silvery stream,
With the mountain towering o'er;
The cool air blent with piney scent
And the tints of wooded shore.

—Hastings Tribune.

Lost on the Prairie.

The life of the sportsman is a medley, made up of good days, and bad days, and we are apt to remember best those that gave us the largest bag of game, the best basket of fish, or the most pleasure. But here and there, scattered along life's journey, we find a day that may be well remembered, that we enjoy much more in retrospect than we did the actual experience. I can assure you, dear reader, that such is the case with the incident I am giving you here.

In the fall of '72 I was camped on the west end of Clear Lake, Iowa, with three companions, shooting, fishing and enjoying life as only four jolly sportsmen can; living under a canvas roof, with game and fish in plenty, and the restraints and cares of business left 200 miles behind. We arrived in September, got our camp in shape, and all through this month and well up into October had the finest kind of shooting of chickens, within a mile or so of camp; but, as the weather grew colder, the chickens bunched up and became more wary. About this time ducks, geese and cranes began coming down from the north, and we divided our time between the chickens and water fowl—shooting the former early and late, and the chickens in the warm part of the day. Eventually game grew scarce around the lake, and we had to make long pilgrimages, north, south, and west, to get a good bag. As I was returning one evening from a hunt, I noticed several flocks of ducks, circling around over a field, and on going to the place discovered it to be a piece of late buckwheat that had just been harvested. The ducks were having a regular picnic in it, and apparently had not been molested, as hundreds of them arose and left for the lake on my approach. I did not fire a shot, but went to work and built a couple of good blinds, and made an appointment to occupy it Monday morning. I kept my little secret, intending to surprise the boys Monday with a bag of game that would make their eyes stick out. I would shoot ducks in the morning,

then hunt chickens during the day, and work back to the buckwheat for the evening flight.

Sunday evening, while we were lounging around under the trees enjoying our after-supper smoke, I heard an almost continual firing from the upper end of the lake, until after dark. This was in the direction of my buckwheat field, and I had grave fears that it was being shot out, as after-dark work will ruin the best of flight shooting. Monday brought one of those grand autumnal mornings, so often seen in prairie countries. Hazy atmosphere, and a cool, bracing breeze from the northwest, full of nature's life-giving tonic. I was astir early. Lighting the camp lantern, I got a cold bite, put a lunch in my pocket, called old Don, and was off. I made lively tracks for the buckwheat field, and had barely time to get fixed in my blind, when a flock of ducks appeared over the timber in the east. They had just commenced leaving the lake for their morning feed; but in vain did I strain my eyes to catch a flock coming my way. A few scattering birds came in toward the field on a scout, circled around at a safe distance, and then left for other parts. Just as I had feared: They had been pounded so hard, and so late, Sunday evening, that they had been burned off their feeding ground, and it would be many a day before there would be any more shooting in that field. The sun was well up above the tree tops, when I called Don, and struck off across the prairie toward a field of wheat shocks. It seemed to be my day off; though we hunted hard all the forenoon, we struck only one covey of chickens, and they left the country on the first rise. About noon I turned the point of a steep hill I had been circling, and came suddenly out on the shores of a pretty little prairie lake—an ideal place to lunch and loaf away the mid-day hours. I got out our bite, and, with Don's help, put it where it would do the most good. After lunch, I got out the old briar-root and took a smoke; then stretched out on the brown grass for a nap. It was well along in the afternoon when I awoke, and set off across the prairie towards the lake. From the top of a high hill I could look far off to the north and see

a dark line of timber. That I knew was the grove in which our tent was pitched. I kept my general course toward this landmark, working out to the right and left to take in as many stubble fields as possible, but the birds seemed to have all left the country.

Just before sundown I noticed a large flock of chickens coming down from the lake, and, about a half mile ahead of me they set their wings and dropped down into an old dry slough—locally called the "peat bed." It seemed that my hard day's work was to be rewarded with success. Everything pointed to the best hour's sport that I had ever enjoyed on chickens. Before me in the tall grass was a flock of several hundred full-grown birds; the wind was just right for working over the ground; the dew was falling and the birds were sure to hold well in such good cover so late in the day. Old Don, like myself, had grown pretty well discouraged, and, when he struck the edge of the tall grass, was ranging close in and about ready to quit on the least encouragement from me. When he caught the scent of the covey he stopped as though paralyzed, his nostrils began to quiver and he looked back to see if I was on hand; then, worked cautiously forward into the tall grass, and stiffened out on a beautiful point. Three birds got up from under his nose, and I knocked down two of them. The old dog worked up a few steps and came to another point. Four birds got up and two of them let go, at the crack of the little 12-bore. Thus the sport went on until it grew so dark that I had to drop on my knees in order to get a better light on the rising birds. Darkness at last put an end to the shooting, and taking the last bird from Don's mouth, I slipped it into my pocket and looked off to the northward for my landmark. It had disappeared in the gathering gloom of night, and I was alone on the prairie. This did not worry me much at the time, for, I was sure that I knew the locality and could lay my course straight for camp. Arranging my heavy load so it would carry easy, I struck off across the prairie with a heavy bag and a light heart. The night had shut down very suddenly and very dark. The wind was

blowing from the northwest cold and damp; but I did not mind it. I was used to these tramps and consoled myself with the thought that I would soon be at camp to surprise the boys with my big bag of birds and sit down to a nice, warm supper. Thus my thoughts ran, as I trudged wearily along through the wet grass towards home.

How different the world looks to one under the varying conditions we meet along life's journey! A short hour earlier I had but three chickens in my coat pockets, and was tired, dissatisfied, and discouraged. Now, everything was changed, and I climbed the steep hill towards camp, whistling as happy as a lark. But I was destined to see yet another turn of fortune's wheel before reaching my goal. After walking long enough, as I thought, to reach the timber, I sat down on a boulder to rest, and have a smoke. It was very cold, and, when I came to make a move, I found I was so tired and stiff that I could hardly get on my feet. I left part of my chickens there and made another start, but had walked but a few steps before I found myself wading through grass nearly to my shoulders, and the footing very much as though I was walking on a straw stack. I knew too well what it meant—I was back in the old peat bed where I had shot my chickens. In a word, I was lost on the prairie. I knelt down, scratched a match and looked at my watch. It was nearly 10 o'clock, and here I was, just as far from camp as when I started and so tired I could hardly stand.

It seemed impossible to go any farther, and equally impossible to stay where I was. I must keep moving, or I would soon be unable to move; so, taking my bearings from the wind, I made a new start. I trudged wearily along, my gun and chickens growing heavier all the time, until, completely fagged out, I was obliged to sit down again to rest. After a short breathing spell I pulled myself together for another attempt, thinking I would surely make the timber without having to stop again, but had not gone ten rods before I found myself once more wading into the tall grass of a peat bed. I sat down and pondered over the situation.

A misty rain had set in, it was getting colder every minute, and my only chance was to keep my blood circulating by exercise until I could reach camp, or strike a house—and there was little hope of the latter, as there was not a house in sight when the sun went down. Knowing the general trend of the peat bed, I figured that I could follow its northern margin westward to its end and then strike squarely to the right and reach the timber. As a first step I threw away the rest of my game. After what seemed hours of tedious walking, a bright light suddenly flashed before me and was instantly gone. A few steps farther on I ran against a farm wagon. I yelled "Hello!" at the top of my voice, and waited results, and in a few minutes saw a man standing before a window lighting a lamp. He threw open the door and stood staring out into the night, with the light held high above his head. I anxiously inquired for directions to a hunters' camp near the foot of Clear Lake. He courteously invited me to come in and rest, commenting upon my "used up" appearance and adding with a laugh, "Well, I believe it's the worst case of 'lost' I ever saw."

The truth dawned upon me almost instantly: I was in the house of Mr. W., and hardly forty rods from our camp. I had visited the house every day for weeks, buying milk, butter and vegetables for camp use, and had stopped and talked with W. the evening before for an hour. When the situation dawned upon my beclouded mind, it was so ridiculous that I could not blame him for laughing at me. I rested a little, got a drink of milk, and then Mr. W. pointed out the fire my friends had been keeping up for me all night. It was after 2 o'clock when I straggled into camp and found one of the boys waiting for me. To his inquiries I replied that I had gone out of my way a little coming in, but made it all right after a long walk. It was only a few days, however, until the boys found out all about it, and they never ceased joking me during the four months we spent together in camp.

—Sports Afield.

A Winter Night's Tale.

A number of years ago Arthur B. and the writer, in company with two other shooting friends, had gone into our winter camp in northern Iowa, where we spent two months trapping and hunting. The first really heavy snow of the season had been falling all day. Charlie and Al W. had started off early to make their line of traps—intending to hunt across the ridges on their way home and pick up a deer if possible. When the early December night closed in they had not yet returned; but this did not worry us any, as they had been over the ground many times and were well acquainted with the country. More than likely they had followed a deer too far to get home and put up with some settler for the night. About 10 o'clock we fixed the fire for the night and crawled into our bunk. Arthur was soon asleep and I was on the borders of Dreamland, when I heard the rattle of a farm wagon and the Yip-yip-yip of a pack of wolves, coming up the river road. I nudged Arthur, listened a minute and said: "Yes; that is that drunken Swede coming home from town again—no danger of the wolves hurting him."

The road wound along the creek bank near our camp, between big stumps—some of which just barely cleared the wheels—and it was a wonder how he escaped them. The team was young and lively; he was giving them their head; and they were cutting a furious pace as they came tearing along over the frozen road. When nearly opposite our camp, there was a crash and we heard the team go flying up the road with the whiffletrees slapping against their legs. Arthur jumped out of bed, opened the tent flap and listened a few minutes; not a sound could be heard, save the snarling of the wolf pack. "Will," said he, "get into your clothes and come on! That poor devil is probably stunned and those cowardly brutes will tear him to pieces before we can get to him."

The storm was clearing off. It was a beautiful winter's night, but we had no time to admire it. When about 100 yards

from the snarling pack, we heard four sharp reports in quick succession. Then all was still. Turning a sharp bend in the creek, we came suddenly upon the scene. There stood our two partners with guns in hand, staring at the overturned wagon-box and a dead wolf; but no Swede was in sight.

"Where on earth is Ole?" said I to the boys, as we came up to them.

"That is just what we are trying to decide," said Al.

"Boys," I continued, "he was in the wagon, for we heard him singing, and I am very sure, from the sound of his voice, that he was too full to get far away, and you were on the ground so soon after the smash that the wolves could not have made away with him."

"Look here, boys," said Charlie; "when we came in sight, these sneaking wolves were gathered around the wagon-box and it may be he is under there."

The moon shone forth brightly from under a bank of clouds just as we tipped up the wagon bed. There lay poor Ole—apparently dead; his head in a pool of blood and the snow dyed crimson all around him. Turning him over, I found an ugly scalp wound, but could discover no fracture. He was still alive; so we got him on the hind-wheels of his wagon and took him to camp. We washed and dressed his wound and put in the rest of the night working over him. An hour before sunrise he recovered consciousness, and from then on improved so rapidly that in the afternoon he was able to be moved home; but it was some time before he was able to go to town again. He was very thankful to us for saving his life, and well he might be; for if it had not been for the nearness of our camp and our ability to care for him, it would have been his last trip to town.

—Sports Afield.

A Day in Ellington Woods.

"Evening in Ellington woods."

In writing of one's experiences afield and astream, many narrators derive most pleasure in telling of the days when they got the heaviest bags or fullest creel; but it is not so with the writer. Some of the happiest outings ever participated in would be called a failure if measured by the contents of my game pockets, or by the weight of my fish basket. In the lovely autumn season I enjoy a ramble in the wood or a row on the river, purely for the pleasure of being with nature and away from the hurrying, dollar-getting world. Not only do such rambles furnish present enjoyment to the nature lover, but retrospectively furnish him pleasure through all his days, smoothing the way for the faltering step in the winter of life.

I have a rich store of such memories to draw on, but none of them furnish me more pleasure than that of an afternoon's squirrel hunt in Ellington wood. It was one of those lovely second-summer mornings when all the world seems to rejoice, that I stepped out of the house on my way to the office. Standing on the porch I looked in silent admiration across the fields to Lime Creek. The first cold snap had come and coated the stream with an inch of ice. Following it, had come those azure Indian summer days when the very heavens were golden, the nights clear and frosty, and the mid-day sunny and warm. Out of the rosy east the morning sun sent long mellow shafts of gold aslant the autumn-tinted foliage along the creek bank. The hills on the far side were clothed in a rich-hued garb that formed a fitting frame to the glorious panorama stretching

away to the east. With a sigh, I pulled out my appointment book and looked over the day's page. The forenoon was all booked, but I could arrange to get off for the afternoon. Turning to Mrs. Steele, who was standing in the door, I said: "Little Partner, how would you like to spend the afternoon in Ellington wood?" She replied: "Just the thing, Will; I knew what you were thinking about."

On the way to lunch I met my friend, J. F., and asked him if he and Mrs. T. would not like to join us. The invitation was promptly accepted and 2 o'clock found four happy people whirling away down the creek road behind a lively span of bays. A four-mile drive on the main road brought us to a blind cross-road. Turning into this we drove back into the timber twenty rods and hitched the team. The ladies had plans of their own for the afternoon, and would not join us in the hunt. J. F. and I filled our pockets with shells, shouldered the guns and struck out for the squirrel timber. We were hardly among the big trees when an animal ran pattering over the leaves and up the side of a dead tree. Just as he disappeared in a hole, I fired, but scored a miss. We passed through this strip of woods without seeing any more signs of game, and, crawling through a barbed wire fence, entered an old half-cleared corn field. We had half crossed the field when a squirrel scurried over the ground and up the side of a dead tree. It was a large gray and we wanted him. I stayed where I was, while J. F. worked cautiously in the direction of the tree. As soon as in range, he slowly raised his gun and I was anticipating its report, when the squirrel suddenly vanished back of the tree. J. F. approached the tree and I walked to where he stood. He had hardly reached a point where he could see the back of the tree, when there was a quick flash of gray and the squirrel appeared on my side. I was not quick enough; the sly little rascal observed my movement and slipped to the other side; but my companion's gun spoke and, as the echoes reverberated among the painted hillsides, he picked up the first squirrel of the day.

We reached the edge of the wood again without getting another shot, but had hardly gone 100 feet along the ridge when, hearing a rustle in the leaves, I turned my head just in time to catch sight of a gray streak disappearing in the leafy top of a big tree. J. F. and I surrounded the tree, and, walking slowly around it, peered up amongst the thickly leaved branches; but not a sign of gray could we see. We took up our watch on opposite sides of the tree, standing motionless. The faintest breath of an Indian summer breeze rustled the leaves overhead, causing their variegated hues to shimmer in the slanting rays of the afternoon sun.

Several times I thought I saw a moving gray spot among the leaves, but closer observation would prove it to be a flickering leaf. My neck beginning to ache from such steady gazing into the tree-top, I decided to change our plans. There was a large bunch of leaves in the crotch near the top. I told J. F. to fire a shot into it, and, at the report, a shower of leaves came floating down on the breeze. To say that we were surprised at the result would be putting it mildly, for down with the leaves came four squirrels, one dead, and one wounded, while the other two dashed off with both of us in pursuit. After a short run they treed and continued their homeward flight among the branches overhead. One of them stopped a second, to balance himself for a long leap, and I caught a bead on him just as he gathered for the spring. He left the limb as the gun cracked, and, clearing the limb eight or ten feet, dropped to the ground dead. J. F. fired at the other one, which had turned to run in the opposite direction, at the report of my gun. His shot was unsuccessful and the cunning little gray whipped around behind a tree before the second barrel could be used. I picked up my last kill, and, just as I was putting it in my pocket, J. F. raised his gun quickly and fired—this time successfully.

We passed through this strip of wood without seeing more game. At the foot of the hill, a long narrow woodland slough

stretched away to the east for eighty rods, bordered on either side by thick underbrush. A cute old grouse, that had defeated all my efforts for his capture during the entire season, made his home on the margin of the slough. It was always about the middle, on either one side or the other, that I had flushed him. On the approach of man or dog, he would dash into the thick undergrowth and, sailing just above the top of the tall grass, drop into the thick brush on the other edge. On my first introduction to him he had played this little game on me twice before I realized that it was impossible to capture him single-handed. I had a scheme for his capture that I meant to put into execution, and, with this end in view, I told J. F. to follow along the south side of the slough and I would take the north side. In this way, if he should fly across from either side, the one on the opposite side could get a chance at him. I had hardly reached the middle of the slough when I heard the old pheasant whirr up on the south side and burst through the underbrush with a roar. I knew by the sound about where he would strike, and, stepping quickly behind a tree, waited for him. A streak of brown burst through the brush, flashing across the golden bar of sunshine. My gun flew to my shoulder and I pulled the trigger, though with small hope of getting him, for my aim had been in a vague manner at a momentary flash of brown. I was shooting black powder; but when the smoke drifted away, I saw the cunning old cock throwing up the leaves in his death struggle, and felt well repaid for the day's outing. Fifty birds killed in the ordinary way would not have given me as much pleasure as this one. Joining J. F. at the end of the slough, we walked around over the ridge toward the team, and, as we neared the carriage, could hear the merry laugh of the ladies and were glad to know that, like ourselves, they were enjoying the outing. And so we hitched up and drove leisurely home, refreshed and better prepared for the duties of the morrow.

—Sports Afield.

Impressions by the Way.

The writer was born among the timber-clad hills of New England, but emigrated to the prairies of the west when a boy. I had read of the changes taking place in the east, but everybody sees things from a different standpoint, and personal observation is the only way that anyone can learn the existing conditions in any section of the country. Recently I made a visit to my native state. While on my journey, as I was whirled along through the denuded hills, I was reminded of these lines:

"No more I see in this loved spot
The groves I loved of yore,
The woodman's axe has cut the trees
That I would fain restore.
The little brook where on summer days,
I wandered gay and free,
Is but a dry and pebbly path,
O'ershadowed by no tree."

To one who has lived in a prairie country, where groves of forest trees are planted and every effort made to encourage their growth, the ruthless destruction of the grand old forests makes a deep impression on his mind.

The people who originally cleared off the timber from these hills intended to utilize them as pasture and farm lands, but their barrenness, and the introduction of the silo, has wrought their abandonment, and today they are a mass of blackberries and brush.

I noticed, in some places, where interest had been taken in the matter, some fine groves of second-growth timber, but this movement is not general and there is not the interest taken in it there should be.

Serious results have followed this destruction of the forests of the eastern states. The streams and lakes are gradually drying up. Many streams that used to carry a large volume of pure, living water all the year, dwindle down to mere rivulets in the summer.

One lake on which I used to sail and fish has completely disappeared. This lake was over two miles long, and one and a half miles across. Nothing remains to make the location of this once pretty sheet of water but a few patches of marsh. Many fine flour mills that used to hum with busy life are now silent and rotting down beside dried-up streams.

The snows that used to go off slowly and soak into the ground when protected by the forests, go off now with a rush, washing away the hillsides and doing much other damage.

The trip through the east did not strike me so forcibly until last November, when I made a trip across southern Nebraska, northern Kansas, and noted the changes that had been wrought there since my last visit.

Twenty-five years had elapsed since I had visited this country. Then, after leaving the settlements along the Missouri and its tributaries in the eastern portion of these states, our train glided out onto a great ocean of green. Nothing but rolling prairie, as far as the eye could reach; the crest-lines of these motionless waves of green intersecting each other at every conceivable angle.

What little timber there was was restricted to the narrow fringes along the streams, the courses of which could thus be defined until lost in the distance.

Scarcely a sign of civilization could be seen—only prairie, bare prairie. Most of the pioneers had settled in the timber along the banks of the streams, as there was not a bush nor a tree to be found anywhere else.

There were a few straggling settlers scattered over the prairie, but they lived in sod houses and dugouts, which, at the time of year, were indistinguishable from the mass of green surrounding them. The small towns along the railroads were merely little clusters of houses, standing out on the prairie, unsheltered and unprotected by tree or shrub. These hardy pioneers felt the need of timber and, one by one, they made an effort to secure groves.

The experiment proved a success and last fall, when riding across these states over the same routes, I could hardly realize that it was the same country. Nearly every farm now has its large grove and orchard; the little prairie towns have grown into fine villages and cities, with broad, shady streets and beautifully shaded lawns and parks.

The stranger flying across the country now on a fast train and seeing the numerous groves and the town buried in a bower of green would almost think it was once a timber country and find himself looking for the stump fences.

Another pleasing feature that has been added to the landscape is the many little lakes that have been formed by the damming-up of the draws.

I was eating supper in a hotel in the little town of Smith Center, Kas., last fall, and the waiter asked me if I would have fish. I replied: "No, I don't like fresh fish too far away from the water." He replied: "These fish are all right; we caught them last night."

I ate them and found them fresh and nice. Upon inquiry I found there was a fine little lake two miles east of town (Rock Island Lake) over a mile long and twenty feet deep in places. On my former visit to that country I had shot quail over the same ground.

At Erickson, Neb., is a "made lake" that affords some of the best bass fishing to be found anywhere. These lakes are numerous all over the west and their numbers are being added to every year.

The timbered countries should do everything possible to prevent the wastefulness of the large tracts of virgin forest now standing and put forth every possible effort to re-forest the bare hills where it has been destroyed. Timber values are increasing every year, and the available supply decreasing.

As towns and cities build up our lakes and streams are every year becoming more a necessity for water power, irrigation and domestic water supply.

Forest, lake and stream are inseparable; the preservation of one means the perpetuation of the other. In the middle west where originally the timber supply was short, people know its importance as a homemaker and are making every effort to encourage the planting, protecting and preservation of forest trees.

In Nebraska over 250,000 acres have been planted with forest trees and according to the last reports the state now has 1,500,000 acres covered with forest.

If this state of affairs continues until the end of the century the section of country once laid on the map as the "Great American Desert" is destined to become one of the richest and most beautiful agricultural regions in the world.

—Twentieth Century Farmer.

Oak Point.

A Day at Lake Tetonka.

I think I hear the reader say: "Where is Lake Tetonka?" Well, my dear disciple of Izaak, if you have not made the acquaintance of this beautiful little gem of the northwest, you have a very pleasant experience to look forward to.

If you will take a large map of Minnesota and look up the county of Le Suer, you will find the little city of Waterville, located in the southeast corner of the county, on the shores of Lake Sakata and Tetonka.

My friend Mr. Barnes and I left Hastings, Neb., on the Burlington & Missouri limited Tuesday morning, September 4, at 2:30 o'clock, arriving at Waterville at 4:40 p. m. We had corresponded with C. L. Van Fleet of Maple Point, and found him at the depot with carriage awaiting us. After a lovely drive of three miles along the north shore of Tetonka we entered a fine grove of old hard maples, and turning to the

left drove out onto a large headland and stopped at the door of the Maple Point Hotel.

Here we found a large, home-like, main building surrounded by several comfortable cottages, boat house, and every requisite for the care and comfort of the angler.

From the village to this point is a pleasant drive, and the villagers and visitors drive it often to enjoy the cooling lake breeze and to picnic beneath the grand old trees.

But pardon me. Here I am ranting about scenery, when I started to tell about fishing. But a man is excusable under the circumstances. Pick a person up on a hot, dusty day in western Nebraska, whirl him over the steel rails a few hours and set him down under these old trees on the shores of a beautiful lake, with the fish breaking water in all directions, and if he does not get a little off at first he had better stay at home. The change was so delightful that Friend Barnes and I just loafed until the call for supper.

Early the following morning we started in two snug little rowboats up the lake, and after a row of a mile dropped anchor at the mouth of Canon River. A delightful breeze was blowing across the lake, making it comfortably cool, and rippling the water just enough to make good fishing. We enjoyed the best of sport for two hours, when our minnows gave out. We had some worms and tried them, but bullheads and sunfish were the only kinds that would do business with us on that bait, so we pulled up anchor and went in to replenish the inner man and our bait pails. And right here is where we encountered our greatest difficulty. Frogs for bait casting could not be found, and the only minnows we could get were young sunfish or croppies. With good chubs or shiners I believe we could have caught all the fish we wanted before noon. We had more trouble to get bait than fish; in fact, the grown-up fish behaved toward us with the courtesy due two tenderfeet from Nebraska.

Mr. Van Fleet and one of his men seined for over an hour after dinner to get a few minnows for our afternoon fishing.

About 2 p. m. we loaded our boats and pulled away for the old fishing ground. The wind had died away and hardly a ripple disturbed the mirror-like surface of the lake. This calmness made it much warmer and more uncertain for our sport, but as we were to leave for home on the night train we could not afford to wait for wind and weather. During the first hour after anchoring we hardly got a bite, but about 3:30 a nice breeze came creeping over the lake, and we had royal sport until nearly sundown.

I will tell of one very strange thing I experienced here, that I never noticed anywhere before to such a marked degree. Mr. and Mrs. Van Fleet fished in a boat anchored only about twenty-five feet from ours. Their catch consisted mostly of pickerel, croppies and perch, while we caught as fine a string of pike as I ever saw caught in one afternoon.

About 6 o'clock Mrs. Van Fleet suggested that we take in the anchors and pull for the cottages as we might lose out on supper if we stayed out longer.

The other boat was some distance ahead and as they struck the deep water, above "Oak Point," Mrs. Van Fleet tied on a large "Skinner spoon" and as she cast it out back of the boat she called back to us, "You have been catching all the good fish this afternoon, but I am going to hook one now that will be some fish."

While it was said in good-natured banter, the words were hardly spoken, when her little steel rod was nearly torn from her hands and bent until the tip struck the water. She was an expert with the rod, and, though taken by surprise, she quickly recovered herself and put him on the spring of the steel.

I called to her, "You have got a big one and if he ever reaches the weeds he is as good as free."

She put up a good fight, but unfortunately her line was old and would not stand the strain caused by a slight tangle on her reel.

He would come up, then shoot down, then tug away on the line in a vain effort to reach the rush beds. In one of these spurts he evidently got a turn around a bunch of rushes and broke the line. We were all genuinely sorry for Mrs. Van Fleet when she reeled in the broken line, minus hook and fish.

We reached the landing just as the bell rang for supper, hungry for the meal, and well satisfied with our outing and our catch, with the exception of "the big fish that got away."

—Outdoor Life.

A Trip to Spirit Lake.

Thatcher Monument.

Several years ago, my wife and I, with a large party of Iowa dentists and their wives enjoyed a week's vacation at Hotel Orleans at Spirit Lake, Iowa.

Sailing, rowing, bathing and fishing were the sports enjoyed and everybody had a good time.

When the party broke up and departed for their homes, Mrs. S. and I decided to stay a few days longer and put in a day at Lake Okoboji. It was a beautiful morning when we drove away from the Orleans. Passing through the little town of Spirit Lake, the road wound through the timber along the shore of East Lake Okoboji.

We reached "Arnolds" at noon and enjoyed a social dinner with some old friends from Waterloo and Des Moines. After dinner we strolled up the lake shore as far as "Pillsbury Point," then back through the woods to the granite shaft erected by the state of Iowa in memory of those who were slain in the Spirit Lake massacre.

Just south of the granite shaft stands the memorial pile, built of stones gathered along the lake shores, and erected by Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp to mark the last resting place of her parents and other members of the household. Just north of the monument, nestling under the big trees, stands the original Gardner cabin, in practically the same condition as when entered by savages on that spring morning.

At the time of our visit it was occupied by the only white person who escaped death on that memorable day so long ago, when the cruel Sioux made their last fight on Iowa soil.

We were welcomed at the door by a sweet-faced, gray-haired little lady, whose every feature tells the tale of sorrow and suffering through which she has passed. While looking at her fine collection of Indian relics I asked questions bearing on the massacre and gradually drew out her story. Never will I forget the impression made upon me as that quiet, sad-faced lady described the scenes of that March day that deprived her of home and parents and left her captive among blood-thirsty savages.

The story could not impress the reader as it did the writer, for as she described the horrors of that afternoon she pointed out the place where each scene in the tragedy was enacted.

I will not attempt to give the entire story, but an outline of it from memory in her own words as well as I can.

"My father moved with his family to northwest Iowa, and settled on the shores of this beautiful lake in July, 1856, and erected the house in which he was afterwards murdered.

"During the summer several other families came in and settled along the lake and by fall there were probably forty persons settled in the beautiful groves along the nearby lakes.

"In the fall Inkapaduta's band of Sioux appeared upon the quiet scene. This chief, as I remember him, was probably 60 years of age, about six feet in height and strongly built. He was deeply pitted by smallpox, giving him a revolting appearance and distinguishing him from the other members of the band. His natural enmity to the white man, revengeful disposition and matchless success on the war path won for him the place of leader among his people.

"The causes leading up to the massacre were said to have been these: One day while the Indians were in pursuit of elk they had some difficulty with settlers in the lower portion of the Little Sioux valley. The Indians contended that the

whites intercepted the chase. There was another story to the effect that a dog owned by a white man had bitten an Indian, that the Indian killed the dog, and that the white man gave the Indian a beating. It was also said that the settlers whipped a number of squaws who were carrying roasting ears from the field. At any rate the hearts of the Indians became filled with revenge, and starting north the redskins commenced committing depredations along the route. Having killed a number of settlers, these Indians reached the vicinity of Okoboji the evening of March 7th. The settlers had no knowledge of what had transpired down the valley; nor through the long hours of that night, wrapped in peaceful repose, did they dream of the foul conspiracy that was brewing.

Thatcher Cabin.

"My father was intending to start for Fort Dodge on the following morning to secure a load of supplies. As we were about to sit down to breakfast an Indian entered the house, wearing the guise of friendship and claiming the sacred prerogative of hospitality. A place was prepared for him at the table and he partook of the frugal meal with the family. This Indian was soon followed by others until Inkapaduta and fourteen warriors, with their squaws and papooses had entered the house. After eating, the men of the tribe became sullen, insolent and demanded ammunition and other things. When father was giving one of the Indians a few gun caps, he snatched the whole box from his hand. At the same time another attempted to take a powder horn from the wall, but was prevented by Harvey Luce. The Indian drew his gun and would have shot Mr. Luce had the latter not seized the weapon and turned it in another direction. About this time Dr. Harriott and Mr. Snyder, other settlers, called, knowing of father's intention of

going to Fort Dodge and wishing to send some letters to be mailed. Father told them that he could not go and leave his family, as he feared the Indians were going on the warpath. He also suggested that the other settlers along the lake be notified of the danger and immediate arrangement made for the defense of the little colony. Our house being the largest and strongest, his idea was to have the settlers gather in it. Dr. Harriott and Mr. Snyder thought that this was only a little pet of the Indians and that it would soon pass over, so they did some trading with them and returned to their cabins.

"The Indians prowled around until noon and then went over to the house of James Mattox, a short distance up the lake, and stole his cattle, which they drove away and killed. In the meantime a consultation had been held at our house and it was decided that Messrs. Luce and Clark should go out and notify the settlers of the impending danger. They started about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, never to return. About 3 o'clock the report of guns was heard coming from the direction of the Mattox house and then we were no longer in doubt of the awful danger that was hanging over us.

"Just as the sun was setting, father, whose anxiety would no longer permit him to remain within doors, went out to reconnoiter. He, however, hastily returned saying:

" 'Nine Indians are coming, now only a short distance from the house, and we are all doomed to die.' His first thought was to barricade the door and fight till the last, saying:

" 'While they are killing us, I will kill a few of them with the two loaded guns still left in the house.'

"Mother protested, having not lost faith in the Indians who took breakfast with us. They entered the house and demanded flour, and as father turned to get them what remained of our scanty store, they shot him through the heart, killing him instantly. When first the Indian drew his gun on father, mother or Mrs. Luce seized it by the barrel and pushed the muzzle down, but the other Indians turned on them, caught their hands and beat them down with their guns, then dragged

them out doors and killed them. Then they took what they wanted from the house and destroyed everything else.

"When the Indians entered the house and during these awful scenes, I, then a child of 13 years of age, was seated in a chair, holding my sister's baby in my arms, with her little boy standing on one side of my chair and my youngest brother on the other, clinging to me and crying in terror for the protection it was impossible for me to give. Heedless of their cries the brutes tore them from me, dragged them out in front of the door, and killed them before my eyes.

"All of this time I was so horrified that I was paralyzed with fear; no tears moistened my eyes nor a cry escaped my lips, but now, left alone I begged them to kill me. It seems I could not wait for them to put me out of my misery. One of them approached and seizing me roughly by the arm said something I could not understand, but I knew from their actions that I was to be made a captive.

"This was no relief, and all the tortures and indignities inflicted on Indian captives arose in horrid vividness as my benumbed brain began to act.

"After the bloody scalping knife had done its work, I was dragged from the never-to-be-forgotten scene. Behind me I left my heroic father and dear mother murdered in a cowardly manner in the very act of hospitality. In the yard lay the three children and my dear sister and brother dying, and amid these scenes of unutterable horror I took my farewell look upon them all.

"Filled with loathing for these wretches whose hands were wet with the blood of my dear ones, we plunged into the gloom of the forest and the coming night. However, neither the gloom of the forest, nor the blackness of night, nor both combined could begin to symbolize the darkness of my terror-stricken heart."

Mrs. Sharp was taken to South Dakota, where she was kept prisoner for several months, finally being rescued through the efforts of friendly Indians, assisted by Colonel Flandreau of St. Paul.

Little Partner.

It is a hot, dreamy summer afternoon, with the mercury flirting around the 100 mark—too warm for work or any kind of exertion; so I lean back lazily in the office chair, put my feet on top of the desk, and allow my thoughts to wander retrospectively over the past. Whenever I do this I always wind up with some pleasant day's shooting or fishing. The little thing that leads me away from the present into the past, this time, is a plain, old, smoke-stained briar pipe that has kept me company on many a camping trip and has furnished me consolation when the fish would not bite or the shot and birds failed to connect. I found this old reminder in my barnyard coat pocket, where it has lain for many years—untouched, unused, forgotten. Holding the old relic in my hand, I close my eyes, and memory carries me back to many happy experiences in field and wood, on lake and stream, in which the dear little wife and I participated in days gone by.

Little Partner, like most ladies of those days, knew nothing about the use of rod and gun when we were married; but, as soon as the holidays were over, we set about planning our first vacation, and finally decided to take advantage of the low excursion rates to Clear Lake, Iowa, and spend a few weeks there. This was more than twenty years ago, and the fishing and shooting we enjoyed on that trip were something that the young sportsmen of today will never see. It was our first outing, and I took pains to see that Little Partner should realize all she had expected, and not go home disgusted with her first experience. We fished, hunted, and sailed together in that paradise of game and fish for four weeks, and then returned to our home happier and better able to cope with our winter's work.

And thus it is that the sight of this old pipe brings before me many of these trips. But there are two that are more directly associated with the old briar, and stand out more

vividly than all others. The first of these is a camp scene on Waterford Lake in the state of Pennsylvania. There are two white tents standing on a little rise of ground under the big shady beeches. In front of the larger tent there is burning a bright, cheery camp fire, and, gathered around it, I see the happy faces of friends. This was the last long trip that Little Partner ever took with me, and our last outing under canvas. The next is a bright autumn afternoon in northern Iowa—that long-to-be-remembered day when we took our last hunt together in the Lime Creek woods. This was the time of year, above all others, when we enjoyed roaming the woods with rifle or camera—picking up an occasional squirrel or catching a pretty bit of landscape now and then on the gelatine-coated plate.

We never had any family jars over this matter of taking a day off, for Little Partner entered into the pastime of Diana with as much zeal as I did. In truth, she was a far better shot with the rifle than I ever expect to be. So, when I pushed back from the dinner table on this bright September day and proposed a tramp up creek, the proposition met with a hearty response from the other side of the table. I hurried through with the work of the office, and was soon back home. Little Partner was dressed for the trip, had everything ready, and was waiting for me at the door. I got into my shooting togs in a jiffy—and we were off. A short down-hill walk of ten minutes, and we were on the creek bank. I was carrying the camera, and, just as I stepped onto the foot bridge, I chanced to glance up-creek and stood enraptured with the beauty of the scene. The winding stream, with its willow-fringed shores, the distant hills and beautiful clouds overhead, made up such a pretty picture for the sensitive plate that I could not pass it by. Folding up the camera, we crossed the creek and were soon on our old hunting ground. The magic touch of Jack Frost had wrought wonders on the garb of hill and dale since our last visit. Then all was summer green, while now the autumn

yellows, browns, reds and purples held sway. This and the falling leaves that came whirling down at our feet told the story of the summer's close and that Mother Earth had completed her work for another year. We were happy, and little did we think it would be our last tramp together in those dear old woods.

For several years I had been trying to get a snap-shot at Little Partner when she was in the act of shooting or intent on getting a shot at a sly old grey, while he was trying to keep a tree between himself and her rifle. So, when we got among the large trees, I handed her the rifle, while we both kept a sharp lookout for squirrels. I had the camera set, and was on the alert for my shot. The frosts and stormy weather had stripped the larger trees of their leaves, and kept the squirrels closely indoors for a couple of weeks, and, as they were quite sure to be out in force, laying up their winter store, we expected to catch some of them on the ground among the small oaks. But in this we were disappointed. Most likely they had been down earlier in the day and were now in the tree tops or basking in their nests. We passed through the grove, to the corn field on the north side, without seeing the saucy flirt of a single gray plume. South and west of us extended a large tract of the finest kind of "squirrel timber"—oaks and walnuts, and many of them hollow. Edging this wood was the creek we had crossed; the land sloping to the stream, and cut into ridges by a number of small ravines coming down from the hills. This made the best of hunting when the leaves had fallen from the large trees on the ridges, as in the ravines there was cover to conceal us, and we could see without being seen.

We had proceeded but a short distance up a nearby ravine, when we heard a squirrel barking in a suppressed way a short distance ahead of us. I pointed to a big red-oak and said, "Our squirrel is in that tree." We approached the tree carefully, but Little Partner could not get sight of his squirrelship, so she handed me the gun. Taking it, I moved a little, to get a better opening. I could only see the top of his head

and ears, but covering what I could see, I pulled the trigger, and, at the crack of the gun, he let go his hold and dropped to the ground. Putting him into my pocket, I handed the gun back, and we moved on up the ravine, and soon heard the scratching of another squirrel as he ran up the farther side of a nearby tree. When he reached the crotch, he poked his head through and peered down at us, offering a beautiful shot; and at the crack of the rifle he wilted without a kick—with his head stuck fast in the crotch. Here was a predicament we had not figured on; our squirrel had been killed too dead, and was hung up where we could not get him. It was a long way to the first limb, and I was too poor a climber to fancy shinning up twenty feet of bare tree trunk. So I told Little Partner if we got that squirrel she would have to shoot him out. She fired four or five shots, hitting him every time, but did not dislodge him; then, turning to me, she said: "I am done shooting at dead squirrels." So we left him and moved on—killing two more squirrels in that ravine, and then crossing to the next.

Here there was an old dead stub of a tree—the home of a large family of grays. As we approached it, we heard a noise. Little Partner stepped behind a tree and said, "Will, you drive him around, and I'll watch for him." This was my chance for a shot; so I walked off about fifteen feet, turned around and snapped the camera on her, while she had her rifle at ready and was watching for the squirrel.

We lounged around under the trees for a while, and then strolled leisurely across the flat towards home—talking over the hits, misses and other events of the day. Measured by the calendar, it is but a short step from the present to that lovely September evening when we climbed the steep bank of Lime Creek, just as the sun was sinking from sight behind Mahony's Grove. Though but a short interval, as measured by time, events have transpired in my life that make it appear an age, and when I sit down and live over again the happy hours of the last day that Little Partner and I spent in the woods together, I drift away from the present into the dim and dreamy past.

The noise, heat, and din of the city are lost; I feel the cool breezes fan my cheek, as nature, in her sombre autumn garb, casts the mantle of night over the living world. I hear the rippling waters of Lime Creek beneath our feet as we cross the old foot bridge, and feel the touch of Little Partner's hand on my shoulder as we wearily climb the steep hill near home. Every year in September I visit the little village and hunt over the same grounds where we spent so many pleasant hours—happy in the thought that she and I are again in sweet communion when on this sacred ground.

—Sports Afield.

The Old Fishing Hole.

Tramping up a stream in northern Iowa one day last summer with my camera, I surprised a little barefoot urchin, standing on a rock with a big fish pole in his hand. So interested in the sport was he that he did not hear my approach, until I pressed the button of the camera and secured a picture that carried me back to one bright September morning, many years ago.

It was Saturday. I had risen early; cut my wood for over Sunday; put a lunch in my pocket; and, shouldering the little single-barrel, struck out for the river timber after squirrels and ducks. I hunted through the half-mile of oaks that bordered the river without seeing a sign of game. Standing on the bank of the old Maquoketa, I deliberated for some time whether to go up the river or cross over and go to Coffin's Creek. Less than a mile above me was Rohrick's Bend, and at this point the stream was very wide, with a low marshy flat running out from the west shore—furnishing a good feeding and preening ground for the little blue-winged teal, and many a one had I bagged there on former hunts. After deliberating some time I finally decided to try my old ground again. Reaching the thick brush that bordered the bank at Rohrick's Bend, I crept carefully along the edge, peeping through here and there; but the glassy surface of the water was smooth and undisturbed by the wake of a solitary duck; nor did the long strip of sluggish water reaching away to Burrington Ford show a sign of duck life. Somewhat disappointed, I turned away from the river and cut across through Acre's Grove—hoping to pick up a stray pigeon or pheasant and strike the river higher up. Boy-like, I entered the heavy oak timber with my thoughts more on the duck prospects ahead than on the game I was looking for. Suddenly, a large bird sailed down through the trees and alighted in the old woods road a few rods ahead. I could scarcely believe my eyes, and, by the time I was fully awake

to the situation, he burst away with a roar of wings that dispelled my day dream. No more pheasants sailed down in the road to be looked at, and I followed the windings of the old road until it brought me out on the bank of the long bayou.

I had been over this same ground many times before, on fishing and hunting trips; but had always followed along the bank of the bayou and struck the stream above—thus cutting off a large bend in the river that swept around to the west and back again. But on this morning, noticing that the water in the bayou was low, I determined to cross the dead water and hunt out the bend beyond. Wading hip deep through the water, I crossed over the flat, oozy shore on the other side. Here in the soft mud could be seen the clumsy, bear-like tracks of a pair of raccoons, the slouchy, dragging trail of a muskrat, and the dainty foot-prints of the mink on his nightly hunt. At any other time these stories of woods life would have interested me very much; but this morning I was after other game, and, picking my way through the high grass and ferns, I kept my course to the head of the bend. With an eye to a possible pigeon, I carefully scanned the tall cottonwoods, but without seeing a feather. Coming out on the sloping bank, I saw there was only a thread of a stream where I expected to find the river; the main part of the current ran around the west side of an island which divided the stream at this point. This island was covered with a dense thicket. Moving along cautiously across the island, I crept to a point that gave me a view of almost the whole length of the bend, when I beheld a sight that nearly took my breath away.

The water was clear, with a coarse gravel bottom, and these riffles fairly swarmed with great big redhorse, darting here and there playfully—their big back fins sticking out of the water. This secluded spot had not been disturbed by fishermen for years, and it was too bad to disturb them; but no emotion of pity softened the youthful savagery of my heart. Great was my joy at the discovery, as these darting beauties meant

lots of sport and many dollars of spending money for me. Setting my gun against a tree, I went into the thicket and cut a pole; then, diving into my pockets, I brought out a fish line and a snare. Wading cautiously out on the riffle, I dropped the line in above the fish and worked it slowly down with the current when near the school. All the big ones darted out of the stream, but I stopped the snare and held it quietly until they came back, then let it drift over a big fellow's gills and snatched him out. For over two hours I kept up the sport—getting a big string of the beauties that made a load for me to carry home. Many a day thereafter until away into November I went alone to this charmed spot, guided from afar by an old dead cottonwood that stood on the island, and, as long as I kept my secret, these visits were always rewarded with a good string of fish. Each time I caught a fish, the school would disappear and I was never able to discover their hiding place. However, by the time my catch was on the string and I had waded back, the school would be returning to the shoal; the small ones first, the large ones working in more cautiously. After an hour or so of this work, the large ones would not return and I would have to quit for that time; but the next day there would apparently be as many as ever on the riffle. All through that fall and the following spring my strings of fish were the envy of my schoolmates, and they tried many times to discover where I caught them, but did not succeed.

One day in September (a year after making my discovery) I was returning with one of my boy friends from an unsuccessful day on Honey Creek, when in an evil hour, under promise of secrecy, I disclosed to him my hidden fishing hole. My faithless friend did not prove true to his trust, and it was not long before a path was worn across the island by other feet than mine; the fish became shy of the place where they were continually disturbed and finally disappeared entirely from their old retreat. As one still searches for something that is lost past all hope, so it was with me. I never went past the place

without taking a peep at the old riffle, but never to find more than one or two redhorse or a few small stone-rollers. I had given away my discovery only to have it made public property, and had discovered the faithlessness of a hitherto faithful friend.

—Sports Afield.

The Electric Building.

Memories of the World's Fair.

This grand exposition was wondrously beautiful under all conditions, but when the Magician of Night steps forth and waves his wand over the "Fair City," then the illusion is complete.

The outlines and masses, fine architecture, vistas, plazas and lagoons are always grand and inspiring, but it needs the softening shadows of night and illumination of thousands of electric lights to bring them out in all their glory.

The weary multitude that, during the day, wander from place to place without any object, the debris from lunch baskets and odor from restaurants, seem incompatible with the beautiful palaces, terraces, plazas and lagoons. When evening comes and the darkness becomes mysteriously luminous, the reign of enchantment begins.

Sitting on the steps of the pavillion, one balmy October evening, I watched this transformation take place and its memory will go with me through life. Gradually the shadows ascend the Louisiana monument; until the last flickering bar of sunshine disappears from its gold-banded dome. Slowly the cascades grow transcendant with interior flames of colored lights, constantly changing in color and depth, varying in shade and producing the most beautiful effects imaginable on the falling waters.

The cornices, corners, arches and domes of the big buildings stand out in red and golden beads of fire. Launches and gondolas are gliding by noiselessly over the quiet waters of the "Grand Basin" and the song of a gondolier floats up on the soft south wind as he keeps time with the dip of his oar. The discordant and inarticulate murmurs of the gazing crowd are succeeded by silence as they stand awed in admiration of the enchanting scene unfolded before them.

Deep beyond words, and far beyond expression, is the subtle pathos of this transitory scene at such an hour. As I arise from the pavilion and turn my steps homeward, a feeling of sadness creeps over me to think that this fragile city of beauty, like the evening rainbow, must soon disappear. But its magnificent memories and lessons can never die. The outlines and proportions of these fine models of architecture will survive in the minds of the thousands who have been charmed and educated by their contemplation.

Any attempt to estimate or measure the lessons of the great Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and its educational benefits, would be impossible at this time. It is very doubtful if 5 per cent of the visitors to the fair make a careful study and analysis of the exhibits, but a large per cent study those exhibits in which they are most interested and carry home a rich store of information that will be invaluable to them through life. Thus, much of the information gleaned at the fair will be gradually unfolded in the future conditions of private and public life.

The immensity of the grounds, buildings and exhibits are appalling to the "short-time" visitor and a great deal of time is lost by many, strolling through the crowd in an unorganized manner. Of course, if he has a "short limit" ticket, a minute inspection is impossible, but if previous arrangements have been made, the grounds carefully studied and a program mapped out, much can be accomplished in a short visit.

In the Phillipine Village.

One of the greatest lessons taught by the exposition is the continual advancement of the world. In every exhibit on the grounds, and even on the Pike, one cannot fail to observe the upward march of humanity. To me this picture is more vividly depicted in the transportation building than anywhere else. The humblest person in the land today enjoys traveling facilities that the treasuries of monarchs could not command a century ago.

Standing in the middle of this great building, surrounded by over sixteen acres of transportation exhibits, dating from the age of oxen, donkeys, camels, and canoes, up to the palatial trains and vessels of today, the contrast is so great that one stands awed and cannot help but speculate on what will be the result of this onward march in another hundred years.

Some very sharp contrasts can be drawn if we go back no further than the "World's Fair" at Chicago. At that time there was not an automobile on exhibit. At St. Louis there is a first-class automobile service all over the city and on the grounds. In one of the aisles of the transportation building there is an auto for family touring, fitted up as luxuriously as a Pullman car. It carries a forty-horsepower engine and can make a speed of forty miles an hour on good roads. The locomotive that was the pride of the transportation building at Chicago, and the fastest in America at that time, is now pulling a suburban milk train. As I stood admiring the "Big Four" engine in the center of the building at St. Louis, I could not help but wonder if the same fate would befall it in the next ten years. Who can tell?

Perhaps in another decade the steam engine will be superceded by the electric locomotive. Ten years ago they were hardly known. Today the Baltimore & Ohio are using several electric locomotives weighing 165 tons each. Nearly all the big railroads are using them for hauling passenger trains through long tunnels.

Another noticeable development at St. Louis, in contrast with Chicago, is the introduction of steel in the manufacture of cars. If there was a steel car at Chicago, I failed to see it. At St. Louis the only wood freight cars on exhibition are the refrigerator cars.

These are only a few of the lessons of advancement taught in this one exhibit.

Not only is this true in the matter of transportation, but in every walk of life the same lesson is taught, as we proceed from building to building.

Memories of the World's Fair.

While governments and races have become extinct, man has moved steadily upward, constantly improving physically, morally and intellectually. In all that makes life worth living, the intelligent wage-earner of today gets more out of life than the rulers of kingdoms at the time of the signing of the Louisiana Purchase treaty. To the innumerable visitors, gathered from all quarters of the globe these buildings have given an indelible object lesson that will increase in value every year of their lives. Art, architecture and sculpture will disappear with the summer flowers, but their lineaments and proportions will survive as long as life lasts in the memories of the millions who have studied and admired them.

Coming after so many others, this exposition has had many advantages over all others, and no one can wander around among those palaces, reared with Aladdin-like magic, without admitting that it is the greatest of them all.

—Hastings Journal.

"Mrs. S. climbed out on the rocks."

A Day at Cliff.

It is a fact often commented upon that there is something about Nature which makes her lovers clean, honest and generous. Anyone who loves the mountains, woods, lakes, streams and birds is the better for it, and enjoys life the more. The love of these things grows with us, becomes a part of us, and we are the better physically and morally for it. No matter where our lot is cast, this desire to get close to the heart of Mother Nature comes back to us. Some beautiful morning we leave our city home to go to our place of business, and the first step on the hard pavement brings with it a reminder of whispering leaves, twittering birds and rippling waters. There is perhaps something in the air this particular morning. As we step out it catches us in a way we cannot explain. We cannot reason out the feeling, but it is there. We miss the flutter of dead leaves about our feet; the resilient carpet of moss which clothes the great avenues under the pines and cedars comes into our mind and we want to be there. The left hand longs for the familiar motion of pushing aside the intervening branches; the right itches for the weight of rod or gun. The sun and sky seem to glare down in our eyes and we long for

the restfulness of the leafy shade. And this noise, familiar but just now unwelcome, the clatter of city traffic is irritating. Where is the breezy and beautiful murmur of tree-tops? The sound of tinkling waters, and the foam-crested rock? Unconsciously we feel the balance which becomes so habitual when carefully stepping on the wet rocks of the little mountain stream when casting the fly. Ah! it has come back to us—that longing for the tumbling waters and towering mountains where we have enjoyed so many happy days. And more than ever we miss the lullaby of rippling waters which soothed us to sleep at night and met us at daybreak with cool kisses as we cast our fly in the pool below the falls.

What recollections these thoughts of mornings in the mountains bring us! The soft breeze, laden with the odor of pine and balsam, steals through our open window. The lazy restfulness of doing nothing, if nothing it pleases us to do, or the anxiety for action when action has been decided upon; the healthy, vigorous appetite waiting to be satisfied. Where do we find such mornings except in the mountains? And the evenings—the silent, restful evenings; the body tired, but the mind invigorated by the long tramp over mountains or strenuous work of trouting and photographing. And last, but by no means least, those camp fires with our party gathered around within a circle of light talking over the experiences of the day, singing songs and telling stories. Who that has sat and listened to good stories while watching the climbing flames and smoke of a camp fire will ever forget it? Thoughts that are impossible elsewhere come then. You are carried away and become a part of the story that is being told. But we are in the city, with its noise and bustle! Let us get out of it, and be off for the mountains for two weeks' sweet communion with nature.

We had been planning this trip for some time—the doctor, the attorney and myself—and, through correspondence with friends at Cliff, in the South Platte Canyon, had arranged for accommodations for our party of six, composed of the doctor,

the attorney and his wife and daughter, and the writer and wife. At last the long-wished for day arrived and at 8:15 p. m. we stepped aboard the Burlington flyer and were off on our vacation. We made a quick and pleasant run, and it was with joyous anticipation that we stepped off the train at Cliff next morning at 10 a. m. We were all tired and rested up until dinner, and about mid-afternoon we strolled up the canyon, fishing, photographing a little here and there and getting reacquainted with old scenes which we had enjoyed on other vacations.

About 3 o'clock we were obliged to hurry back to the cottages to escape a sudden shower, but a mountain party is always cheerful, so we enjoyed the day thoroughly, as we lounged about reading, talking and planning the different stages of our trip. Toward evening the clouds broke away and the sun peered through for an instant before it passed below the long range of mountains behind our cottage.

Next morning the sun rose in a cloudless sky and after breakfast of sizzling hot trout and other good things we were off up the canyon.

Though our whole party started off together, it was plain to see, by the difference in equipment, that we would separate if we followed our intentions as indicated by what we carried.

The attorney, wife and daughter had their trout-tackle, which meant they were after the speckled beauties; the doctor his alpine staff, the writer and wife a light trout-rod and camera. We strolled along the bank of the lovely little stream until the canyon began to narrow, when the doctor, with a look of determination on his face, left us and headed for the highest mountain peak in sight. The attorney and family were out after trout and pushed ahead up stream, stopping now and then to fish the most likely looking trout waters. Mrs. S. and I dropped behind, as we stooped to pick and eat the luscious red raspberries and gather boquets of beautiful mountain flowers which grew in great profusion and endless variety along the sides of the canyon. The cool morning air lent exhilaration

to our already over-flowing spirits, and we enjoyed our surroundings and scenery so much that it was 10 o'clock when we reached the falls. I took out my flybook and prepared a cast for the pool below the falls. While I was whipping the stream, Mrs. S. climbed out on the big rocks over the roaring waters and enjoyed the cool breeze. We got back by 11 o'clock and after dinner lolled around indolently in the cool shade of the inviting pines back of the cottages, reading and shooting at a target with the attorney's rifle. As we rested there on the cool mountain side under the pines we could not help feeling sorry for our friends who were sweltering in the sun-baked streets of eastern cities. As the sun disappeared behind the mountain peaks in the west we returned to the cabins and prepared to enjoy the evening meal which our mountain appetites demanded.

After supper we gathered around a big fire of pine branches and logs and listened to Judge J.'s story of the trial of the first murder case in a Colorado mining camp in the days when the west was "wild and woolly." A cool, odorous breeze blew down the canon and gently dissipated the smoke from the fire which burned with unusual brightness and steadiness. We were so interested in the judge's story that it was late bed-time before we realized it. When we sought our beds, the rippling music of the waters came floating up so distinctly that it seemed as though the little mountain stream was flowing directly under our window. The wind sang lullabies in the pines, and, as the God of Slumber approached, his attendants seemed to say:

"A little murmur in mine ear,
A little ripple at my feet."

Thus the lovely autumn days slipped rapidly by; trouting, mountain climbing and picnicking, each one a golden bead on life's string. Now, in the long evenings, when the wintry blasts howl around the house and drive the drifting snow against the windows of our cozy cottage, we sit by our com-

fortable fire and live those days again. Just why more men do not emancipate themselves from drudgery once a year is more than I can tell. "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her."

The better you know her the more you love her, and you will live longer and be happier for having made her acquaintance. The woods, hills and fields are the greatest health restorers on earth. It was Longfellow who said:

"If thou art worn and hard beset
By sorrows thou wouldst forget,
Go to the woods and hills—no tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."

A Day on Bear Brook.

"When autumn winds begin to blow,
And rustling leaves drift to and fro;
Then shadowy forms of bygone days
Dance in the sunshine's golden rays."

It was a lovely day early in November. The oaks and maples were blazing forth in their autumnal colors; the elms along the creek bank were sadly giving up their yellow leaves to Mother Earth. Sharp frosts had killed the tender vegetation and browned the uplands and fields; but here and there in sheltered spots along the sunny banks of the stream the grass was still green, as if trying to persuade the passer-by that another summer had come. But alas! the falling leaves, the fading golden rod, the tints of the foliage and the blighted vegetation told too well the tale—that summer's days were o'er and that the twilight season of the year had come. I had started out for a day in the woods, with my little 20-bore on my shoulder and my setter, Queen, at my heels. Striking across the meadow land that separated my home from the timber, I came out on the banks of the creek and followed its winding course to the southward. It was a quiet, lazy day; one of those dreamy fall days when all the world seems to be at a standstill—halting between summer and winter. The spirit of the hour seemed to catch me, and I strolled along, following every winding turn of the stream—forgetting the gun on my shoulder and the empty game pockets in the old Barnard.

A thick fringe of willows lined the bank, completely hiding me from the stream. Every few rods I cautiously parted them and peeped up and down the creek, in hopes of catching sight of a stray mallard or teal; but I reached the point where I was to leave the main water course without seeing so much as a duck feather. About three miles from town I struck the mouth of a little rivulet, known locally as Bear Brook—a clear, swift little stream that comes from some large springs away

back among the hills and empties its crystal waters into the murky waters of the creek. Here, among the bogs, under the shelter of the thick brush, was a low neck of ground dividing the two streams—an ideal spot for a belated woodcock, and seldom had it disappointed me. I sent Queen in, and followed along the edge of the tangle for a short distance, but found it impossible to see through; so, holding my gun high above my head, I incautiously broke through into the opening, stumbled over my staunch little setter, and flushed a pair of woodcock from under her nose. The two whistlers went straight up above the tops of the trees, then made a quick twist up stream; but I caught one of them on the turn, and, at the crack of the gun, he came whirling down to the ground. Queen rushed in through the thick tangle of brush and vines and soon came back with the bird in her mouth and a pleased look in her eye that seemed to say, "He's a beauty."

About forty rods above where I got the woodcock the brook made a sharp turn to the northeast. The hills were high on the north and west, and there was a dense thicket of thorn-apple and crab-apple, with wild grape vines running all over them. I had seen a brood of young pheasants there early in the season, and now headed for their sunny nook as the next best place to help out my empty game pockets. I kept Queen to heel until I got in a good position on the outside cover, where the birds would be sure to give me a shot when they were flushed. Queen worked carefully into the thicket and I soon lost sight of her, but could still hear the patter of her feet on the dry leaves. Soon this stopped, and while trying to locate her, a pheasant burst out of the farther side of the thicket. He was fifty yards down-stream before I sighted him and he kept straight on after I fired—not even leaving me a feather as a souvenir. I hardly had time to drop a shell in the empty barrel when two more birds broke cover. One of them went straightaway down-stream and the other circled around the end of the thicket to the left. I fired at the quarterer and killed; then swung around and pulled on the other one, just as

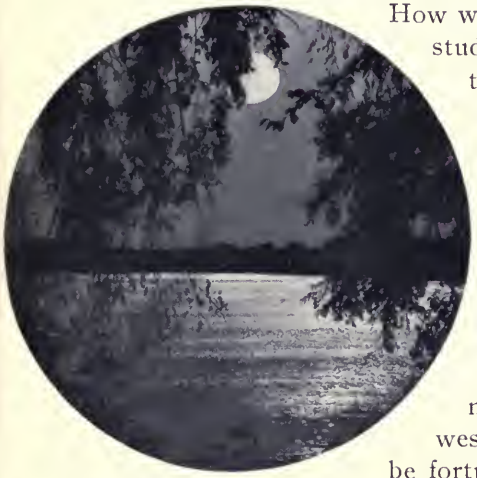
he was turning the creek bend. The feathers flew and so did the bird—apparently none the worse for leaving a part of his new winter suit with me. Queen retrieved the dead bird and then stood wagging her tail, waiting for further orders. It was nearly noon, and the cool, sparkling waters of the spring that bubbled up from under the roots of the old elm suggested lunch time. From the side pocket of the old duck coat I disinterred the tin lunch-box and the folding drinking cup, and we went to work to try and satisfy the inner man and the inner dog.

I lounged around on the sunny bank for an hour or more after lunch, trying to decide whether to go back down-stream or hunt up to the head of the creek and across through Seeley Wood towards home. On the latter route I was almost sure to pick up a few gray squirrels, if I failed to get any more pheasants. Besides, as another inducement, there was an old cock pheasant at the head of the brook, that I had flushed several times during the fall without being able to get a feather from his glossy coat. This was likely to be my last hunt of the season and I wanted one more chance at him. I sent Queen in ahead and we worked cautiously forward; but found nothing until we reached the head of the brook. Here there was a large tract of wet, springy ground, with many little rivulets a foot or so wide flowing through it to the main brook. The place was thickly covered with alders and willows, with a network of vines running all over them—one of the likeliest places in the world for grouse—and this was the home of our wary old cock of the wood. On all former occasions when calling on him he had been so unmannerly as to bolt out the back way while I was knocking at the front. In order to defeat this move of his, I adopted different tactics. I sent Queen in the front way and took a position on the north side of the thicket near an opening he would have to cross in the line of flight formerly taken when flushed from his home cover. The ground was wet where Queen was working and I could hear her pattering in the water as she neared the middle of the thicket.

Suddenly the noise ceased, and I knew she had him nailed and that I would soon have another chance to try my skill on the old fellow. I heard the patter of her feet again, as she moved up on him. The old deceiver was making a run for it before taking to wing. Then there was another silence and I held my breath, for I knew what was sure to follow. A breathless silence of a few seconds; then a faint "Quit-quit!" a roar of wings, and the bird broke cover on the extreme point of the thicket. The instant the cunning old cock struck the open he circled short to the right around a point of brush, to shield himself. He was just disappearing behind a tree-top as I caught a bead well ahead and fired through the leaves. A moment of listening suspense, and I heard the welcome thud of the dead bird as he struck the ground. To say that I was pleased would be putting it too mildly. I walked around the end of the brush and met faithful Queen, with the bird in her mouth. Taking him from her, I smoothed down his glossy brown coat and slipped him into my pocket with a feeling that this alone was glory enough for one day. He was a magnificent bird, the largest and finest I had ever seen, and I have hunted the ruffed grouse since early boyhood. He occupied the place of honor on our dinner table next day, and his tail was tacked up over the desk in my library, where it remained for many years.

—Sports Afield.

September Days at Madison Lake.



"The sunlit riffles of the bay."

How well do I remember, when a boy studying my geography lesson, picturing in my mind's eye the kind of country and the character of hunting and fishing to be found in the great forests, lakes and rivers of Minnesota. Geography was always a favorite study with me and specially that pertaining to the lake-land country of the north and the mountainous sections of the west. I wondered if I would ever be fortunate enough to fish and hunt in that sportman's paradise. It was not until I had entered upon the stern duties of life that those boyhood views were realized, and I was not disappointed in the realization, for some of the happiest days of my life have been passed in this boyhood dreamland. For twenty years I have visited these lakes almost every year, and nearly every month during the year and every season has had its charms. Even the winter, with its cold, its dead and cheerless desolation, has its robe of, chaste white, which, like the fascinations of springtime, the summer and the autumn, has been the theme of woodland verse and song. But in gorgeous beauty there is no season so rich as autumn. A calm autumn day in these northern woods, or floating calmly in a boat on the bosom of one of those beautiful lakes, with your better half as a companion, is a thing to be thankful for. To see the bright sun floating through the sky of blue, shedding its placid light over the earth when the air is clear, the winds hushed, and the leaves motionless on the trees, then to look along the hillside and mark the bright sunlight and the deep shadows on the autumn-tinted foliage, is a

feast for the eye of a nature-lover. This year we were a little too early to see the picture complete. October is the artist that touches each forest leaf and branch with the dyes which the summer flowers were fain to use. The deft finger of the hoar frost traces out the line and blends them, and the gentle breath of the Indian summer kindles them into a universal glow, which vies with the tints of gorgeous sunset. Until I beheld the Minnesota landscape, I had no conception of the intensity of autumn colors. On a hot September morning, Mrs. Steele and I packed our trunks and fishing tackle and boarded the train for Madison Lake. Mr. and Mrs. Barclay of Point Pleasant had invited us to spend our vacation with them at their ideal resort on "The Point," and we accepted, thankful to leave the city, sweltering in the rays of a September sun, for that cool retreat on Madison Lake. Next morning, at break of day, found us at Randolph, Minnesota, where we changed cars to the Minneapolis & Mankato line of the Great Western. After a run of fifty miles through that beautiful canyon valley, one of the loveliest sections of the park region, we arrived at our destination in time for one of Mrs. Barclay's inviting midday lunches. Saturday afternoon was passed quietly at The Point, visiting with old friends and making new ones, feasting our eyes on the beauties of lake and wood. And what a feast for the eyes of dwellers of a prairie country! The whole landscape was aglow with verdure just taking on the first autumn tints. As we strolled along the shore of the lake, the squirrels chattered overhead, and the waters of the lake glistened between the overhanging branches of the trees, filling the view with constantly recurring surprises, such as metropolitan treasuries have spent millions to reproduce in city parks. Sunday morning we attended services at the little mission church in the village. Monday morning was very cool and a light fog hung over the lake. A light wind stirred up a ripple on the water just right for fishing. After lunch Mrs. Steele, Major McKusick, of Minneapolis, and I loaded ourselves and tackle into a boat and pulled away for the fishing ground. As we rowed

along down the shore I observed a reef of woods and rushes extending out south of the point and suggested that possibly fish would be lying along its side, so we resolved to try it and cast over the anchor. Mrs. Steele started off with a large crop-pie, and soon after hooked another of the same size. The Major followed with a couple of fine pickerel, and I added a pair of black bass. Though we fished for an hour faithfully, after catching the bass, we failed to get another strike, so raised the anchor and pulled in. The days were glorious repetitions of the first. Fish there were, not in great abundance, but in sufficient number to make our angling trips enjoyable and keep our table supplied with fresh fish. Launch parties, boating, fishing, and evening musicales took up the time so fast that our limited vacation was at an end before we realized it. On the last three days on the lake I had Professor Newhall, of Faribault, as a fishing companion, and a more genial gentleman I never met or angled with. We were to start for home on Wednesday, and Tuesday morning found us over on West Bay industriously throwing frogs among the rushes. I was using an entirely new outfit for casting, but was not disappointed, for, let me say right here, that my five and one-half foot New Century steel rod, Shakespeare reel, and Kingfisher line were all right. By 11 o'clock we had a half dozen nice fish, and as we were striking very slowly, we decided to run in. I made a final cast out toward the center of the lake in order to spool up my line smoothly. Hardly had the frog struck the water when there was a tug on the line which brought me to my feet. The fish came in, as I reeled, like a heavy stick until he caught sight of me. Then he made the water boil as he tore away for the rushes. As he turned, I noticed I was hooked to a large pickerel by a very frail hold. I turned him before he reached the rushes, then he sulked and reeled in again like a stick. Professor Newhall stood ready to land him, but when he caught sight of the boat he shook his head savagely, tore loose and disappeared under the boat. However, the fish already on our string would furnish our fish course for dinner,

"My twenty-six inch bass."

and glory enough for the morning's sport, so we were content to quit for the morning.

After lunch we discussed the situation and decided to row across the bay and try Stony Point, which we reached after a pull that forced the perspiration from every pore. We dropped anchor near the rushes, put on frogs, and commenced casting. We worked hard, alternately anchoring and drifting, but were doomed to disappointment. After an hour of this kind of work, we decided to float down south bay casting in favorable places, and if we failed to get a strike, pull out for home. We had drifted in close to the shore and Professor Newhall was rowing out, when, glancing back at my rod, he said, "Doc, your hook has caught on something." As the water was quite shallow, I thought at first I had fouled a snag, but the instant I tightened my line, a large bass leaped clear of the water. I trembled for my leader which had seen much service, but it held firm and when I finally brought him alongside of the boat,

Professor Newhall deftly slid him over the side to a place of safety. My catch proved to be a twenty-inch bass, and a beautiful speciment. Professor Newhall followed my catch with two, then we were obliged to hasten to the boathouse to escape a storm. After our evening meal we strolled out under the big maples and enjoyed our last sunset of the season from beautiful Point Pleasant. Across the bay, westward, the heavens were all aflame, and the sunlit ripples of the bay glistened like bars of polished silver. We stood in the deepening shadows under the big trees in silent wonder and admiration; what were we to speak when the Great Architect was talking? Slowly the sun disappeared, gilding the tops of the loftiest trees with a level bar of fire, for an instant, then lost its light, and we knew our vacation was ended, swallowed up in a misty past with the others.

"I'm thinking of lazy September
And the lakes in the forest so green,
With low-wooded hills beyond them
And the wind-dimpled waters between;
Of the halcyon days now departed,
When I rocked on their waters so pure,
Enthralled by these gems of the forest
While the waves lapped a sweet overture."

Outers' Book.

An Autumn Outing in Nebraska.

September 27, 1892, at 4:40 o'clock a. m., found the writer and his better half boarding the limited express of the C. & N. W. R. R. at Ogden, Ia. We were off for Hastings, Neb., the home of my brother, Dr. J. T. Steele. Our object was threefold—a visit, rest and recreation. For the latter my brother and I had planned to put in all our time behind the dog and gun in pursuit of the little brown beauties. Continuous hard work over the dental chair for the past eight or nine months had nearly worked the life out of me, and for several weeks before starting on my annual trip I had kept myself up on anticipation, and reading brother sportsmen's articles in the papers. I had hungered for months for the good appetite and peaceful sleep that always succeed a tramp behind the dog and gun, in the cool bracing air of an October day on the prairies of the west.

After fixing ourselves as comfortably as possible, we leaned back in our reclining chairs and tried to finish the morning doze, which had been so sadly broken into by the hotel clerk calling: "Time for the 4:40 train." Shortly after daylight our train pulled into the busy little station of Missouri Valley. Here we changed cars to the E. & M. V., and in ten minutes were speeding up the Missouri bottom. At California Junction our train branched off toward the river, and in a few minutes more had crossed the "Big Muddy," and we were twisting up between the bluffs on the Nebraska side. After crossing the Platte River and getting among the big grain and corn fields, we noticed a change that did not strike my hunter's eye as favorable for shooting. Vegetation looked as if rain were a stranger to it; the roads and streets were dry and dusty. In approaching a town it could be marked miles ahead of our train by the clouds of dust rising from the streets; a very discouraging and disagreeable combination for quail shooting.

At 4 o'clock p. m. we arrived at the bright, clean little city of Hastings, and found my brother waiting for us. After a

hearty greeting we were driven to his home, where we were welcomed by his wife. Supper over, J. T. and I left the ladies to talk over the woman's side of the world, and we went down town to see the boys and talk shoot. This same little queen city of the plains contains as jolly a lot of boys belonging to the shooting fraternity as one will find in a city of its size in the country. But they are a truthful lot of shooters and answered my inquiries about the prospects: "Plenty of birds but can't find them; too dry; we have had no rain since July." As the open season began Saturday morning, October 1, my brother and I thought we would face the dust and wind and see if we could not knock out quails enough for our Sunday dinner. We started about 9 o'clock and drove out four miles south of town to a timbered draw. Hitching the horse to a tree, we got our guns, put them together, filled our shell pockets, turned old Sport loose and started down the east side of the creek. We all three worked hard and faithfully down as far as the brush extended, then crossed over and came back on the west side, reaching the buggy about 2 o'clock without seeing a feather. We selected a shady place behind the buggy, spread down the lap robe, and opened up our lunch basket. In the morning when we saw the ladies putting up the lunch, we told them there was enough for a gang of harvest hands, but we had no trouble in disposing of everything but the basket and dishes. While we sat discussing our last cup of coffee, Brother J. T. suddenly turned around and pointed up the creek. Following his finger with my eye, I was just in time to see a fine bevy of quails settling down in the brush on the east side of the creek. Picking up our guns we started after them, J. T. and I keeping along on the outside edge of the timber, letting the dog work backward ahead of us. Old Sport was onto his job, and worked very cautiously, but just as he began to draw on the birds the whole bevy broke cover away ahead of him, and going about eighty rods east, dropped down in a patch of ragweed near an old pasture fence. Circling around to get the wind, we worked up to them carefully, one on each side of the fence. Sport

struck the scent, crawled along the fence a few rods and stopped, saying as plainly as a dog can, "There they are in that bunch." I took one more step forward and they arose with a whir. We each got a shot with one bird to each gun, and that was the last we saw of them, as they went out of sight in the timber and could not be found again. Returning to the buggy we hitched up and headed old Tom for home, hunting every likely-looking place along the road without seeing another quail.

During the next ten days J. T. and I drove out nearly every evening for a hunt, never striking more than one or two bevies on an evening, and not getting more than one or two shots at a bevy. The Thursday evening before I was to leave for home, some of the boys were in L. P. Davis' place of business, and it was unanimously decided that we must have one good company hunt before I left. After talking the matter over we decided to go the next morning to the big lagoon for jacksnipes and ducks.

Friday morning, as J. T. and I were getting on our shooting togs, we heard a welcome "whoa," from the driver, and from Charlie W——, "All aboard for the lagoon." Our rig was a big covered hack with seats arranged on either side and plenty of room under the seats for the paraphernalia, eatables and drinkables of the party; and it takes a good deal of the latter to carry a party of shooters through a day's hunting in this climate.

Our party consisted of Charlie Walrodt, L. P. Davis, Billy Keedle, Dr. J. T. Steele, the writer and Jim Knight, the driver. For dogs we had Davis' two Irish setters and Charlie's staunch old pointer. It did not take long to find out that the weather had changed in the night. The wind had swung around into the northeast and came down cold enough to make a gum coat over the shooting coat feel good. We were all fixed for it but Davis. He wore a light summer coat and had no heavy one along. He shut his teeth, humped up his back to the chilly morning blast and stood it for about two miles, when we saw

he had a sportsman's grit and our hunter's sympathy was awakened. Upon inquiry we learned that Jim had an extra coat under his seat that he kept for just such emergencies. The drive across the prairies between great fields of corn and grain and comfortable farm-houses was worth the expense of the whole trip.

Arriving at the lagoon about 9 o'clock, we tossed out the sack of decoys near the south pass, then drove to the north end, where there were some haystacks. After unhitching the horses and turning them to the wagon feedbox, we all turned to Jim for directions. He said two should go up to the pass on the north arm, put out half of the decoys and shoot there; two should take the rest of the decoys and go to the west side; the other two, who had hip boots, could wade through the lagoon and jump ducks. Davis and Jim went to the lower pass, Billy and the writer were in for the wading. The two that started north had not got two rods from the wagon before "scape!" went a jacksnipe; bang went Charlie's Parker and, at the crack, Mr. Longbill dropped. As soon as the boys got fixed in their stands and we began shooting, the ducks began moving, and Billy and the writer kept them on the move for an hour or two, when we thought things were getting too hot and moved to a more congenial climate.

By this time the snipes began to drop in, and we turned our attention to them until about 1 o'clock, when we all struck out for the wagon for lunch. We were all on hand but Billy K——. While discussing his whereabouts we heard the report of his pumpgun away over on the east side. Poor Billy! He had miscalculated the size of the lagoon and had about three miles yet to walk before he could satisfy the cravings of the inner man. He put in an appearance about 2 o'clock, tired, muddy and hungry, but did full justice to both the solids and liquids.

After an hour's chat and smoke we struck out again. Jim went back to his old duck stand; the rest of us went after snipes. The afternoon was warm and pleasant; almost too

fine for good shooting; but we found snipes enough to keep up the interest. About 6 o'clock we straggled back to the wagon, hitched up, drove up town to Jim's stand and loaded him and his decoys in just as the October sun was sinking behind the western hills. On counting our game we found we had thirty-five birds—fifteen ducks and twenty snipes.

The trip home was shortened by songs and stories. When Jim pulled up at the gate he said: "Boys, divide my birds among the party; I didn't go for game." Compare this, brother shooters, with some liverymen who ask two prices for a team, try to get all the best shooting, and then at night try to sell you their birds for four times their value. It was 8 o'clock when we got into the house, tired and hungry, but what a supper we found awaiting us, and what a pleasure to eat and rest after having spent the day afield!

How much real enjoyment a man loses in life who is not a lover of this noble sport. This was my last shooting on this trip. On Monday my wife and I boarded the train for home, and I returned to my work stronger, better and happier for the trip.

—American Field.

An Evening on Lake Waterford.

Here we are once again in the dear old woods; among the birds, trees, and flowers; away from the prison-like brick walls of the city with its care-worn throng, dusty, sun-baked streets, and rumbling wheels of business.

Our tents are pitched on a grassy slope on the west shore of Lake Waterford; a beautiful little silver thread of cool spring water, rippling over the white sand and pebbles, softly sings its lullaby at our tent door, and winding through the green sward, loses itself in the lake beyond.

Tall forest trees are all around us, and stretching away back of our tent rises a grand old hill, its rounded green top standing out in bold relief against the evening sky, behind which the descending sun is just disappearing as it bids the world good-night.

The glad voices of the birds are ringing through the woods as they join in their evening songs. A chipmunk runs down to the rivulet for his evening drink; after quenching his thirst, saucily flirts his tail at me as he runs up the slanting cotton-wood log to his home in the top.

Lazily rolling on my back in the hammock, I look up through the spreading branches of the old beech and watch the sun-tinted, fleecy clouds, drifting across the evening sky.

But the shadows of evening are gathering; the last golden tinge of the setting sun is fading from the sky. The cool breath of evening is stealing up from the lake; the birds have hushed their songs, and all is quiet; 'tis the twilight hour, the most lovely of all—

> "Oh, twilight hour, spirit that does render birth
> To dim enchantments melting heaven to earth—
> Leaving on hills, lakes and running streams
> A softness like the atmosphere of dreams."

But hark! the voices of night are taking the place of song-birds. The whippoorwill pipes his evening notes from the

point across the bay; the voices of the frogs and little peepers come up from the lake shore; the trembling notes of the tree toad and the katydid, and mournful hoot of the owl, fall soothingly on the ear; for however apparently discordant these sounds may be to others, they are a sweet lullaby song to the tired camper.

But here come Will, Mrs. H., Mrs. S., and Charley for our evening row on the lake. We go down to the landing, get into the boat, throw over the trolling lines, and pull out for an hour on the lake. It is too calm, and the lake too smooth, to expect any success with the hook and line, but the evening hour on lovely Waterford is one never to be forgotten.

Just as our boat glides out from under the heavy shadows of the short line—

Night rises yawning from her couch
And dons a robe of black;
From jewel case then takes a star,
And pins the curtain back.
Her blushing queen, just peeping through,
Turns back to silvered gray;
While fainter grows the crimson west,
Where sleeps the king of day.

A short row across the bay and here we are on the south side of the island; let us rest on our oars for a few moments and enjoy the lovely moonlit scenery around us. Close on our left is the wooded shores of the island; off to the east can be seen the round top of "Washington Mound," and, glimmering through the trees, the lights of the pretty village of Waterford; above us, the bright harvest moon and blue sky, jeweled with its millions of stars.

Now, look down into the calm depths of the lake; there you will see the same sky, moon, and stars; and so real is the reflection that it seems as though our boat is suspended by an invisible cord, between two starry heavens.

We pull on around the island toward camp. The water is so smooth and we glide through it so quietly, that every

little while Mrs. H. or Mrs. S. reach out over the boat and dip their hands in the water to see if we are really moving.

Rowing on around the south side of the island we pass the village boat-landing, and glide along down the west shore to camp. A bright fire of light wood is soon burning and we gather in a family circle around it. The brighter the fire lights up the immediate surroundings, the darker grow the shadows in the forest beyond. What odd and distorted shapes the most common-place things assume in a bright firelight, with the deep forest shadows for a background! See that piece of broken limb; it looks like a panther crouched for a spring! See yon big vine, twisted around that old forest monarch, with its broken end hanging out from the tree, swaying back and forth in the breeze; it looks like a big serpent! That old rotten stump by the side of the path looks like a bear watching a chance to embrace somebody.

Beyond, through the small opening in the trees, shows a little patch of the lake, and so brightly does it glisten in the moonlight that it looks like a suspended mirror in the foliage.

Looking at these unstable shadows is like day-dreaming among the summer clouds. One's imagination can weave them into all sorts of fanciful shapes and forms.

While we have been studying these unsubstantial firelight shadows, Will has got out the violin and we enjoy a half hour singing old familiar songs. If there is any place on earth where these good old airs can be fully appreciated and enjoyed, that place is in the woods, around the evening camp-fire.

The hour is growing late and all but Will and I have retired. We move up a little closer to the dying embers of the fire, and sit an hour longer telling of our hunting and fishing experiences of the past, and planning pleasure trips for the future.

The last flickering blaze of our fire dies out, a little wreath of white smoke is curling up through the dark foliage, we scrape the coals together, cover them with ashes, and retire to the tent.

An Evening on Lake Waterford.

There is no need of an opiate to drive away the business cares of the day, or coax the fickle goddess of sleep, but lulled to dreamland by the solemn voices of night, and the low whispering breeze in the branches overhead, we are asleep almost as soon as we touch the pillow.

"Across the years that have rolled around,
And over the miles that lie between,
Memory flies back to those dear friends,
And our camp, in the woods so green."

—Hastings Tribune.

"Our angler lands at the mouth of Wilson Creek."

A Day With the Buffalo Bass.

On a beautiful morning in early autumn, just as the sun cast his first warm rays on the sleeping world, an angler might have been seen stealing quietly out of a tent pitched among the oaks on the shore of the Buffalo River, in Linn County, Iowa.

There is no excited haste in his movements as he steps into his light boat, pushes it off the shore and paddles away up the mill pond.

Reaching a likely looking place he gently lays his paddle in the bottom of the boat and proceeds to rig his tackle.

As he prepares his outfit for the sport he loves so much we will steal a glance at his outfit and his surroundings.

His rod is a four-piece home-made affair, but serviceable and adapted to the work. The reel, line and box of tackle all tell the story of angling experience in many waters in different parts of the country.

As he pulls his line through the guides and attaches a leader he casts his eye up the river and notes the lay of the land. A moderately wide stream with numerous deep bends, pools, sunken logs, water-covered boulders, stretches of ripples,

and sandy bars where the water flows at the easy pace of about four miles an hour. The banks are lined with oak, soft maple, willow, cottonwood, shrubbery and plants, the leaves of which glisten joyously as the rays of the rising sun fall on the fresh dew which sparkles with animated brilliancy. The stream curves this way and that, out and in among the hills, while here and there a little rivulet trickles down to mingle its waters with the river. It is the breakfast hour along the banks, the birds are darting this way and that, in search of food, or sitting in the branches warbling and caroling forth their joy. Verily, it is good to be in God's outdoors and mingle with his little worshippers on such a morning.

The fisherman pauses to note a few and marks the cat-bird, bluejay, robin, wren, kingfisher, bluebird, kingbird, and then, as the cast is ready, notices a splash and surge of waters near the foot of an old stump standing at the water's edge. Mentally deciding that the bass are feeding on minnows at this hour of the day, he impales one upon the hook and sends it spinning through the air where it falls naturally a few feet below the stump and is trolled slowly by the lair of Micropterus.

When the minnow arrives at the suspicious point in its journey, a swelling of the waters is perceived, followed by a violent tug on the line. The battle is on. By all disciples of Izaak the next few minutes are fully appreciated; but, lest perchance these lines attract the eye of some novice, I will say that, following the first tug, comes a grand rush for deep water, swiftly the line cuts through the water, merrily the reel hums a lively air as the spool makes revolutions faster than the mind can estimate. The supreme effort over, back he comes with rapidity, the reel taking up the slack as he cuts through the water for his favorite haunt by the stump. Here the battle proper is waged. He realizes that, if he can reach his resting place under the old stump, with its roots, limbs and branches, he can by darting about in his subterranean castle, so twist and wind the line around the friendly snags that, while our fisherman was untangling it, he can free himself at leisure.

Pulling this way and that and darting out of the water in efforts to free himself, he gives his enemy little time in which to anticipate his moves. But our angler is versed in these tactics, and knows that if he ever allows his fish to gain the stump he will lose him. So, placing the necessary strain on the rod, he persistently forces the fight in the open water. His captive begins to show signs of giving up and is gradually circled toward the boat and brought to net.

The boat is headed to the shore and our angler lands above the mouth of "Wilson Creek" and following the stream north, angling here and there, changing from minnow to crawfish, from crawfish to spoon, he works the bends till luncheon hour.

Seeking a cool place under the trees, he lies at full length on the green sward, enjoying his repast in contentment and meditation.

The sun, now in the west, throws a shadow along the western bank. As the afternoon advances, insects flutter under the willows, and the bass, having found a new pleasure in surface feeding, scorn the minnow and frog. The bait rod is laid aside and our fisherman attaches a lure of feathers and tinsel, works along back over his morning's course, and picks up as many bass as he did on the morning trip up stream. Then, as he rounds the last bend above the mill, throws out a spoon, takes the paddle and pulls down the pond toward the mill. The moon rising in the east throws a bright light on the water and leaves a sparkling path of ripples behind the boat as our fisherman paddles homeward, well satisfied with his day and his string of fish.

A Practical Joke.

My first boyhood chum in outdoor sports was Arthur G——. He was of medium height, heavy set, had dark hair and eyes; giving him a predominance of the motive temperament, which, in connection with his large caution, made him slow and careful in acting; while I was impulsive and incautious. This was a fortunate combination for me; as his restraining influence held me in check, and kept me from doing many careless and foolish things. Arthur G—— was slow to anger, but had a bad temper when thoroughly aroused. As I was always on the alert to play him practical jokes, I had to be careful not to carry these too far.

I remember once when I got beyond the limit. It was a hot day in autumn. We had been down the river fishing, and on our way back stopped at a big deep spring hole to drink. Arthur was very careful of his clothes and had a novel way of drinking from a river or spring without soiling them. He would place the palms of his hands on the sand, in the edge of the water, then placing his knees on his kimboed elbows, balance nicely in this position and drink. On this occasion I drank first, and was standing behind him as he leaned forward. The position was too tempting for me. I gave him a gentle push with my foot to make him wet his nose. Imagine my surprise to see him lose his balance and go headlong into the drink, like a big bull-frog. The look on his face, as he came sputtering to the surface, warned me to keep out of his way. I did my fishing on the other side of the river on the way home.

Angling for Rats.

Many years ago, while on a trip through the south on business matter called me to the little inland town of D——, in the back-woods country.

As I alighted from the rickety stage, after a twenty-mile ride over a rough timber road, I glanced up the single street of country stores and noticed several men sitting on boxes, each holding one end of a string in his fingers, the other end dropping down through a hole in the "grub plank" sidewalk. This looked like fishing to me and I had to investigate before eating or resting.

Upon inquiring of one of the natives what he was fishing for, he replied, "rats."

I did not know just how to take his reply, but decided to await developments.

In a few minutes he gave his string a quick jerk, and sure enough, I heard the squealing protest of a rat on the other end of the string.

The man pulled his capture up to the hole in the plank, turned over the plank and killed him with a stick.

I then saw that the native had told me the truth, nothing but the truth and the whole truth, and in his one-word reply.

At certain times of the year the town was overrun with rats and when this was the case, angling for them was the leading local amusement.

The sidewalks were made of two-inch pine planks, laid on blocked-up stringers, one to two feet from the ground. The angler would loosen one of these planks (with one or two holes in it) and his angling preserve was ready.

The outfit consisted of a short stout line, and a small stiff hook baited with a piece of cheese.

The oft-quoted saying, "I go a-fishing," had henceforth for me a new possibility of meaning.

How the Doctor Gained His Point.

Several years ago, two friends and I went into camp one night on the bank of the Wapsie River in southeastern Iowa. After making camp and getting supper, we sat around the fire, enjoying its warmth and puffing at our pipes of Durham. During our talk the question came up as to how one could get the most good out of a campfire on a cold night. My companions thought the best way was to sleep with one's feet next to the fire, Indian style. I said that I preferred to lie with my back to the fire, and swap sides as they became alternately hot and cold. But in this land the majority rules, consequently I gave in, and we went to bed with our heads and bodies under our little dog tent and our feet to the fire, which was just outside the tent flap.

In five minutes the boys were both snoring, but the fire of defeat was smoldering in my breast, and I could not sleep. Suddenly an idea struck me and I crawled out cautiously from under the blankets and moved the smoldering fire up as close to the boys' feet as I could without burning the tent; then I piled on a lot of hard, dry limbs, crawled between the blankets again, drew in my feet, covered my head and went to snoring.

In a few minutes G——, who was next to me, groaned, turned over, drew up his feet and thus escaped the fiery torture. Poor B—— did not escape so luckily. He was built for high water and therefore had more length than breadth, consequently it was a long time before he got news from below, but when he did hear from his lower extremities he sprang to his feet and let out a war whoop that would have put to shame a Sioux brave.

After camp got quiet we moved the fire back, went into the tent, fixed up a white man's bed, crawled into it and slept until morning, but I had gained my point and thereafter I had two good solid converts to my way of camping.

Poor B——, he has gone on his last long jaunt. He has crossed the last stream and camped on the further side, where

we must all join him sooner or later, and when called, may we be found fully equipped. G—— is a prosperous physician in a live Ohio city. If he is as great a lover of rod and gun as he used to be, and a reader of the American Field, as he certainly should be, this may meet his eye, in which case he will understand how Doc gained his point on the Wapsie years ago.

—American Field.

Jumping Chickens in the Corn.

I had a relative from the east visiting me in the fall, and as he came from a country where there is no chicken shooting, nothing would do but he must have a chicken shoot before going back. As it was well along in October, it was too late for successful stubble or prairie shooting over a dog. The summer here was very dry, destroying the cover to such an extent that the chickens would not lie to the dog if found on the prairie or stubble, but would flush clear out of range and fly to the nearest cornfield. I told M. that our only show for chickens was to take a good retriever with us and go through the fields and "jump them." He replied that he had never shot any chickens on the wing, and did not expect he would kill a bird in a week in this kind of shooting.

We started out one afternoon about 2 p. m., with a good team and driver, and drove out eight miles from town before stopping. We pulled up on the east side of a promising looking cornfield of about thirty or forty acres, bordered on the south by a large slough. I took the south edge of the field; M. went in about twenty rods; we started to the west side of the field. I had only walked a short distance when a fine covey got up in front of me at long range, and I scored the first miss. They dropped down in the ragweed on the west side of the field. We followed them up, and when they flushed each got a bird. This time they flew a mile west to another cornfield. Our driver had them well marked and we got in and drove over.

Arriving at the field we got out and directed our man to drive to the nearest knoll in order that he might mark down for us. M. and I then started diagonally across the field. The birds got up wild, and every shot was a long range snap shot. We followed these coveys to three or four other fields, swelling our bag to fourteen birds. It was now nearly sundown, and we were twelve miles from home, tired, hungry and cold. Our

driver had foolishly come off without his overcoat, and as a consequence he was shaking as if he had a fit of buck fever.

We are blest in this country with good roads, and on this occasion we made good use of them, driving home in about one hour and a half. When I seated myself at the table, I attacked the substantials in a way that made Mrs. S—— stare at me as if she thought I had lost my manners or gone crazy.

And now, gentle reader, if you have a friend come to visit you and he protests he has never done any wing shooting, don't flatter yourself that you are going to wipe his eye about every other shot, for if you should you might get left as I did. Friend M. claimed he had never done any chicken shooting, but when we counted our empty shells and birds at night his score stood as clean as mine.

—Forest and Stream.

A Lake of Petroleum.

This little freak of nature lies hidden away among the Wind River Mountains at an elevation of about 6,000 feet, sixteen miles south of Lander, Wyoming. It is situated in the valley of the Little Popongee River, at a point where it leaves the giant mountains and winds off through Red Canyon toward the foot-hills.

The face of the mountains, all around for hundreds of feet, is composed of red sandstone. The soil, and even the clouds of dust that come sweeping up the road into our faces, was of a brick-red color. This is probably what suggested the name to the one who christened this narrow valley "Red Canyon." The original oil spring burst through a crack in the red sandstone, at a point where a break appears to have occurred in the solid rock. At least, this is the way it looks to an observer; for, while the layers of rock in other parts of the country are found one layer upon another in regular order, as if pushed up by some powerful force below, here, in the region of the old springs, the order of nature seems to be reversed, and it looks as though the surface had dropped in toward the center, forming a natural basin.

For many years the flow of oil from the springs and wells in the vicinity has flowed into this depression until a considerable lake has been formed. It is a mass of pure petroleum, many feet deep, which has become very thick and sticky on account of the evaporation of the lighter portions. The density seems to increase with the depth; and it is so thick and tenacious at the bottom that a pole forced down into it eight or ten feet cannot be withdrawn. Its mirrored surface is never disturbed by the wind. No matter how fiercely the gale may sweep up through the canyon, it never kicks up any disturbance on this little lake. It remains as smooth and unruffled as though not a breath of air were stirring.

Nature's traps are many, in all her different kingdoms, but I know of none more deadly than this one. The restful bosom

of this harmless looking little lake lures to death many of the migratory water fowl that cross over it. When once a goose or duck sets its wings and drops into this stygian pool of death, its feet sink into the sticky petroleum and all struggles for freedom are useless.

In conversation with Joe Burns, who bored several oil wells in this vicinity, he said: "That little pool is a fatal death-trap for anything that gets caught in it, and the deeper they sink, the firmer they are held. I can push a pole down eight or ten feet, but it is impossible to withdraw it. A jack rabbit, when hotly pursued by wolves, often dashes out upon it to escape its pursuers, when both rabbit and wolves meet a common fate."

The oil, as it comes from the ground, makes a fine lubricator for all kinds of machinery, and has been used by the ranchmen of the surrounding country for this purpose. The wells that have been bored near the lake, have cut off the flow from the springs. There are three of these wells in the group, averaging a depth of 950 feet and furnishing a strong flow of good petroleum, which, if near a railroad, would be valuable property. Lander is now the farthest from a railroad of any incorporated town in the United States, being 145 miles from the nearest railroad point.

—Atlas Magazine.

Some Queer Catches.

I remember, when I was a young trapper, tramping up a creek in eastern Iowa one day in early spring. Peering through some willows into the clear waters of a little creek, I saw a large school of black suckers lying in the shade. I always carried a snare and short line in those days, and, cutting a pole from the thicket, I was soon landing some of the beauties. I was working my snare carefully down toward the nose of a big fellow, when suddenly every fish in the pool darted across the stream and out of sight. I could not understand what had frightened them. I was hidden in the willows and hadn't made a quick move to startle them, but, knowing that the cause of their fright would soon show up, I awaited developments. In a few moments a big muskrat came gliding down the stream toward my snare; I held it still and when his head entered gave a sharp twitch. The wire tightened around his neck and I landed a full-grown muskrat, which I dispatched with a stick and carried the fur home—but I got no more suckers from that hole that day.

On another occasion, when trapping along the Iowa-Minnesota state line, I had a trap set for mink on the Little Beaver that gave me lots of trouble. Morning after morning I visited this trap and found it sprung, the bait gone, but no mink. Visiting the trap one cold morning, I felt much pleasure to find it had been sprung and drawn into a hole in the bank. Taking the chain in my hand, I pulled carefully on the trap, holding my stick ready to crack him on the head when it appeared. The trap came in sight; then a white foot; and I was much surprised, on drawing it out, to find that I had caught an ordinary white house cat. It was a conundrum to me, as it was miles from any farmhouse. I was afraid that he was one that had run wild, but, though frightened at first, he seemed very grateful to me for removing the trap. He purred, rubbed

against my leg, and when I started off followed me a few steps, but suddenly disappeared and I never saw him again.

The next experience was one in which my partner had a rather narrow escape. We were both youngsters at the time. The weather turned suddenly cold one night and "froze in" several traps that we had set under water along the Little Beaver. In the afternoon the ice got thick enough so it would bear, and Charlie thought he would go over the line and cut them out. He had recovered and re-set most of his traps, and was getting along so nicely that he grew a little careless. In cutting a hole, he would cut it just large enough to admit his arm; then put his hand down and locate the trap, before making the hole large enough to work in. He got to his last trap, and, cutting a small hole, shoved his hand down into the water, and it went plunk into the jaws of the trap, which closed on two of his fingers with a snap. He was not much frightened at first, as he thought he could enlarge the hole, withdraw the trap and release his hand. On looking around for his hatchet, he found that he had thrown it on the ice carelessly and it had slid clear out of his reach. He now fully realized his position and was badly frightened. Two of his fingers were firmly fixed in a strong mink trap; the trap was anchored beneath the ice; a cold winter night was coming on, the woods were full of wolves, and he must either freeze, furnish a supper for the wolves, or part with his fingers. After making another fruitless effort, he gave it up and looked around for some other means of release from his predicament. Noticing his gun lying near, a new idea struck him. It was a calm night and perhaps by firing off his gun he could attract my attention. After a hard effort he succeeded in getting hold of it, and fired two shots. I heard them at camp, but, as it was no unusual thing, paid no attention to it. Getting some shells in his gun, he fired again, and kept it up as fast as he could load and fire. Hearing these continuous reports, I knew something was wrong, and, shouldering my gun, struck off up-creek toward the seat of trouble. When I came in sight of Charlie, there he was on his

knees, working the old gun, and mighty glad he was to see me. When liberated he heaved a sigh of relief and said: "Will, I've often wondered how a muskrat could eat off his foot and leave it in the trap to free himself—but I understand now. I only had three cartridges left when you came in sight, and I'd determined, if you didn't show up very soon, that I would leave those two fingers in the trap."

—Sports Afield.

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